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CAIRO, PETRA, AND DAMASCUS.

CAIRO, PETRA, AND DAMASCUS,

IN 1839.

WITH

REMARKS ON THE GOVERNMENT OF MEHEMET ALI,

AND ON

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THE PRESENT PROSPECTS OF SYRIA.

BY JOHN KINNEAR, Esq.

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TO DAVID ROBERTS, ESQ. A.R.A.

My dear Roberts,

The interesting scenes through which we passed last year must become better known in this country from the admirable productions of your pencil, so full of truth, so redolent of the very atmosphere of Egypt and Arabia, than any written description can make them. But however little others may feel interested in reading the following pages, I may hope that you will find here and there some few words of conversation with our old friend Sheich Hussein, or some little incident, unheeded by other readers, which shall recall to your mind scenes that could not be made the subject of your art, and were too dramatic, perhaps, for ordinary prose description. Memory will fill up these meagre outlines, supply all the accessories of the picture, and impart to it the colouring of nature

In inscribing this little volume to you, the companion of my wanderings, I offer but a slight expression of my sincere regard of my value for your friendship, and my admiration of your talents.

JOHN G. KINNEAR.

Glasgow, October 1, 1840.

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PREFACE.

THE object of my visit to the Levant was entirely mercantile. Circumstances, unforeseen before my arrival at Alexandria, induced me to visit Cairo, instead of proceeding directly to Beyrout, as I had originally intended; and until I met with my friend, Mr. Roberts, I had never entertained the design of making the journey through Arabia Petrea, which is related in the following pages. These are little more than a transcript of letters written to my own family during my absence, after suppressing those passages which were of a purely domestic character, and adding some observations, from notes taken on my journey, and during my residence at Beyrout.

In alluding to topics of sacred topography, or to the prophecies so signally fulfilled in the present condition of Idumea and Palestine, I may have added nothing to what is already well known; but

where others have borne their testimony to this evidence for the truth of Scripture, I could not but add mine, though at the risk of appearing trite and common-place.

I am aware that my opinion of the government of Mehemet Ali in Syria is more favourable than those entertained by many persons in this country; but it has not been hastily adopted; it is the result of many inquiries and observations made in the country. I have no desire to appear as the eulogist of Mehemet Ali; I would only show that his government in Syria has not been productive of such unmitigated evil as has been represented—that it is, on the whole, better than that of the Turkish pachas who formerly ruled in that country, and that Mehemet Ali himself is by no means so universally hated as is imagined.

I know that similar opinions are entertained by many travellers who have visited Syria lately, and who have taken some trouble to investigate this subject.

Glasgow, October 1, 1840.

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CAIRO, PETRA, AND DAMASCUS,

IN 1839.

LETTER I.

Alexandria, its outward aspect, Inhabitants, and Streets—Pompey's Pillar and Cleopatra's Needles.

Alexandria, 16th January, 1839.

MY DEAR ——,

I ARRIVED here early this morning, after a delightful run of only five days, from Malta; and have only time to write you a few hurried lines, to acquaint you with my safe arrival, before I start again for Cairo.

I sailed from Malta, about noon on the 11th, on board H. M.'s steamer Hermes, with twenty-two passengers, most of them on their way to India.

The weather was as fine, and the wind as fair, as could be desired. There was just enough of sea to give an agreeable variety of motion; and although a few of the passengers were confined to

their berths, and one or two of those on deck did not at all times look very happy, we had always a pleasant party of fifteen or sixteen at dinner.

When I came on deck this morning I was told that land was in sight, but to my inexperienced eyes it was still invisible. Indeed, the coast is so low, that you can scarcely discern it until you are almost near enough to distinguish the buildings on shore; and when it is seen, there is nothing very attractive in the prospect. As we neared the harbour, an Arab boat, with its large latteen sail, came bounding over the bright blue waves towards us; and having taken the pilot, a grey-bearded old sheich, on board, in an hour more we had dropped our anchor in the harbour of Alexandria.

My first sensations on looking towards the town were, I must confess, rather disappointing. There is nothing striking in the view of Alexandria from the harbour; and yet, the long low reach of sand, without a tree, or a single spot of verdure, to enliven the sterility of the prospect; the white buildings, with here and there a dome, and tall slender minarets, cutting sharply into the deep blue sky; the harbour glowing like molten gold under the morning sun; and the gay dresses in the boats passing to and from the shore; were, perhaps, the very materials from which Turner

could have produced one of his dazzling effects, and given a beauty to the scene on his canvas, which was scarcely to be recognised in the reality. But my fancy had been busy, during the voyage, forming more splendid pictures of the city of Cleopatra and of the Ptolemies.

Having rowed on shore, passing the Egyptian men-of-war at anchor in the harbour, I selected the most respectable-looking of a number of donkeys, which were waiting on the quay to be hired, and rode directly to Hill's Hotel.

On shore I found everything sufficiently novel and interesting. Numbers of Egyptian women, in their loose and somewhat scanty robes of coarse blue cotton, were seen, some of them veiled, and others with their tattooed faces exposed, carrying water-jars, or baskets, on their heads, or naked children astride on their shoulders; long strings of camels were passing with logs of timber, and bales of goods; half-naked boys were playing in the sun; and lazy, vagabond-looking Arabs sat smoking their pipes under the shadows of the houses.

The hotel is a little way beyond the streets, and there I found a grove of date trees, the first that I had seen; Greek and Arab servants, in a variety of costume, were waiting to be hired by the travellers;—I was among a strange people,

a strange language was in my ears; and the feelings of disappointment with which I had landed quickly disappeared amid the new and interesting objects by which I was surrounded.

I have agreed to accompany, as far as Cairo, two of my fellow-passengers on board the Hermes, who are on their way to Bombay; and, as we are to start this evening, I have had only a few hours to see the lions of Alexandria. Had I had time, I should have liked to visit the arsenal and naval hospital, which are said to be extensive and well-conducted; but, except these, there is not much to detain a traveller long here, unless he be a more enthusiastic antiquary than I am. As for my companions for the time, they have only one or two objects in view at present: to secure a good dinner before they start, and to get to Suez as quickly as possible.

Alexandria displays all the bustle and activity which indicate a considerable trade, and has risen in importance under the government of Mehemet Ali. I am told that there are not less than forty European establishments in the city; the harbour is full of merchant-vessels; and the population, which was some years ago about 15,000, may now be estimated at 40,000, exclusive of 4000 Franks. This prosperity, however, has been gained, in a great measure, at the expense of Rosetta and

Damietta. The former is said to be quite deserted, and the latter daily declining.

The Frank quarter is a square of well-built comfortable-looking houses, occupied by the different consuls and the principal European merchants; but it has a half-Frankish sort of look, which harmonises as badly with the surrounding buildings, as the formal hats and tight trousers of the English do with the turbans and ckooftans of the natives.

The bazaars appear close and dark, and the streets are narrow and unpaved. At present they are so covered with deep mud that it is impossible to walk without sinking over the ankles at every step; and even riding on a donkey, I have got bespattered up to the shoulders.

The suburb, inhabited by the poor Arab population, is a mere collection of mud hovels of the most wretched description, too low to be entered without stooping, huddled together without any plan, interspersed with dunghills, and offending the eyes and nose with every species of abomination. I believe Alexandria is never quite free from the plague; and, with such a hotbed of contagion as this, it is not to be wondered at. The people appear to be filthy, too, in their habits, and the half-naked children sit in the sun, apparently quite insensible to the flies,

which fix in little swarms upon their bleared, inflamed eyes.

The two great lions, you know, are Pompey's Pillar and Cleopatra's Needles. Of the latter, which have no connexion with "my serpent of old Nile," but were brought from Heliopolis, only one remains erect. It is a fine block of Thebaic granite sixty feet in height, and is covered with hieroglyphics. The other lies half-buried in the sand.

Pompey's Pillar stands on a low sandy eminence about a quarter of a mile from the Rosetta gate. It is a beautiful column of one piece of red granite, with a Corinthian capital, and a pedestal about ten feet high. I believe the whole column is about one hundred feet in height, and is really a very beautiful and impressive object. It formerly supported the temple of Serapis; and, according to an inscription lately discovered on it, was placed on its present site, and furnished with a capital, in honour of Diocletian. This inscription, said to be legible only in the strong light of the sun, was invisible to my eyes; but other inscriptions, the work of some English sailors, are too legible at various elevations on the shaft, and add nothing to its beauty.

Most unluckily, almost every boat on the canal has been seized for the transport of troops; and

we have only succeeded, with some difficulty, in getting a very indifferent open boat to take us to Atfee, where we embark on the Nile. We shall arrive there, however, to-morrow morning, and hope to find a more commodious and comfortable vessel to take us to Cairo.

LETTER II.

Passage on the Mahmoudi Canal—Atfee—Egyptian village—The river Nile, its importance to the Egyptians—Agriculture—Interior of a Sheich's house—Arrival at Cairo—Buildings, mosques, bazaars, and inhabitants of that city—The Egyptian ladies—Jews and Copts—Tolerant municipal sway of the Pacha—Mehemet Ali's palace and gardens—Hospitals—Madhouse—Slave-market—Egyptian magician—The Pyramids—The Sphynx—Projected Journey to Palestine by way of Petra—Social condition of the Egyptians.

Cairo, 28th January, 1839.

MY DEAR ——,

I ARRIVED here on the 23rd, after a very wearisome and uncomfortable journey, and am now in what is called an English hotel, kept by Mr. Hill, who has similar establishments at Alexandria and Suez. I find nothing very English about the house, except the bills, which are extravagantly high, and the passengers to Suez, who in bad dinners, *khamseen winds*, *prickly heat*, and fleas, have abundant opportunities of indulging their national privilege of grumbling. Would you believe it? there is neither bottled porter nor Harvey's sauce in the house! Such are the dreadful privations of which I sometimes hear loud complaints.

We embarked on the Mahmoudi Canal about six o'clock on the evening of the 16th. Our boat was very small, and had no cabin nor covering of any kind, and the night was bitterly cold. The excitement and novelty of my situation, however, might have kept me awake at any rate; and sailing through a perfectly flat country, under the banks of a canal, there was little to interrupt my thoughts in their wanderings onward or homewards, except a passing boat now and then, and the wild chant with which the Arab boatmen cheer their labour.

About six o'clock next morning we reached Atfee, where we found the same difficulty in procuring a boat as at Alexandria. Two parties who preceded us had got very comfortable boats by writing to Mr. Waghorn; and on these the union jack fluttered conspicuously at the mast-head, while nearly all the others displayed the Pacha's red flag with the star and crescent. The place was full of soldiers in all the bustle of embarkation, one or two boats were seized before our eyes, and there appeared some danger of our being left behind altogether. It was evidently no time for us to pick and choose, or be very nice about our accommodations; and seeing one or two boats at some distance from the more crowded part of the bank, we hastened to them,

and striking a hurried bargain with a reis, lost no time in getting our luggage and the few stores we had brought on board his vessel.

Lazy and dilatory as the Arabs generally are, there was no time lost in getting our little bark under weigh. The reis was afraid that his vessel might be seized by the soldiers; and, as we had been unable to procure a flag at Alexandria, we were not altogether without some apprehensions of the same kind. We were no sooner on board than the boatmen pushed out into the stream, and hoisting their immense sail, we were soon stemming the current at the rate of seven or eight miles an hour.

With a fine breeze in our favour, we soon left the confusion and hubbub of Atfee behind; and the reis assured us that, if the wind continued fair, Inshallah! we should reach Cairo in three days—a truly Delphic assurance—for although the wind continued to blow steadily from the same quarter, our course was changed by every bend of the river. Before two hours were over, the boatmen were obliged to land, and tow the boat against the stream. After toiling till ten o'clock at night, at the rate of scarcely one mile an hour, the boat was made fast to a stake driven into the bank, and we spent a most comfortless night.

Our boat was in rather a rickety condition. It had a sort of cuddy on the after-part of the deck, into which we were obliged to creep on our hands and knees, and just large enough to admit of our sleeping side by side on the floor. Having no beds of any kind, we of course turned in "all standing," and I found my great-coat and a large shaggy Greek capote a very insufficient protection against the cold night wind that whistled through a hundred openings in our miserable cabin. No sooner did daylight begin to decline than the cock-roaches came creeping out of every crevice, the fleas were most incessant and voracious in their attacks, and once or twice when I fell into a sort of doze, I was startled out of it by rats scampering over me.

After four days' tedious and uncomfortable travelling, sometimes running a few miles under sail, and then towing for hours against the stream, now sauntering along the bank, and then taking shelter in the boat from heavy showers of rain; once being nearly capsized by a sudden squall, and half-a-dozen times sticking on sand-banks in the middle of the river, we determined to abandon our boat, and find our way to Cairo with any animals that could be procured.

Next morning (the 21st) we walked to a village at a short distance from the river, in search of

camels or mules. It was, like all Egyptian villages, a poor place enough; but had a mosque with a very lopsided dome and rickety white-washed minaret. We found a party of Arabs smoking under a rude awning of dirty mats and palm-leaves, in front of a coffee-house, to whom we made known the object of our visit; but none of them seemed inclined to take any trouble in the matter. After a considerable loss of time, we found the Sheich el Ballad, or head man of the village, who promised to bring us three camels to carry our luggage; but neither mule nor donkey was to be found.

We had just got our baggage on shore, and were in the midst of a violent altercation with the reis, who, not contented with receiving his full fare for performing little more than half the voyage, insisted on an additional *backsheesh*, when down came all the camels, and all the men, women, and children of the village. In vain we told them we only wanted their camels; every one knew that, but every one was ready to go, and, Inshallah! he would go; they fought with one another to get hold of our luggage, and we with the whole party to keep possession of it: and after an intolerable delay, spluttering of Arabic, groaning and guggling of camels, and screaming of women and children, we at last succeeded in

getting rid of all the party except three. No sooner were the camels loaded, however, than the fellows insisted on being paid before starting; and, in the midst of this new altercation, the reis most unadvisedly renewed his demand for *backsheesh*. This was too much for the patience of one of my companions, who fairly set-to and gave him a hearty drubbing; a mode of settling the dispute which the camel-drivers appeared to approve highly, as they kept calling out "Tayeeb! tayeeb!"—"That 's right! that 's right!" all the time. This mode of settling with the reis seemed to produce a considerable effect on the cameleers, for we had no more demands of payment before starting; and, about eight o'clock, we got fairly under weigh, passing the burial-place of the village, a group of white graves under a clump of date trees.

Our walk was less interesting than I expected. The country is quite flat, and presents no variety of landscape, though some of the villages, which are generally on a slight eminence, formed of the ruins of former buildings, have rather a picturesque appearance at a distance, with their white-washed minarets and groves of date-trees. But the illusion is dispelled on a nearer approach. They are all the same half-ruined-looking, flat-roofed cottages, built of sun-burnt bricks, or mud mixed with chopped straw. The people are poor,

dirty, and ill-clad; and every kind of abomination lies scattered about the open spaces in and around the villages.

By-the-by, I was under an impression that the straw which the children of Israel remonstrated against being deprived of, was used in burning the bricks. It is probable, however, that it was employed as at present. The clay is compacted together by being mixed with cut straw, and dried in the sun.

The Egyptians depend on the Nile not only for the fertility, but the very existence of their country. In a course of 1350 miles, it does not receive a single tributary; and were it not for the annual inundation, which first deposited, and continues to fertilise the soil, the green valley of Egypt would soon be overwhelmed by the sands of the desert. The country is intersected by numerous canals for the irrigation of those lands which are not reached by the annual flood. The labour of the fellah, as the cultivator is called, must be easy enough. The ground is scraped up, to the depth of a few inches, with a rude plough, drawn by a couple of bullocks, and differing very little in construction from those represented in the ancient Egyptian pictures; and the seasons are so regular and invariable, that the fellah is never disturbed by those fears about the weather, which prove

such a fruitful source of anxiety to our farmers at home. The most laborious part of his work is raising water from the canals, to irrigate the higher parts of the land. This is done by means of an engine called the *shadoof*, which you will find very accurately described in Mr. Lane's admirable work on modern Egypt.

About five o'clock we again came to the Nile, at a ferry, where we found a party of Arabs, with eight or ten loaded camels, waiting to cross the river. We embarked with the camels, two or three donkeys, and about a dozen men, in a large boat, in which we were so crowded that we had scarcely standing-room. The animals, fortunately, were very docile and quiet, otherwise we might have run some risk of a ducking; for the camels knelt in the boat with their loads on, and any movement among them might have upset us in a moment.

Our camel-drivers had either miscalculated the distance, or purposely deceived us; for they had assured us that we should reach Cairo before sunset, and we now learned that we had still a distance of eight camel hours—about twenty-five miles—to travel. We determined, therefore, to proceed for a few hours longer, and sleep at one of the villages on our route, and to start at an early hour next morning. After dark, however, our

guides became very cautious of approaching the villages, which, they said, were full of "bad people, who would rob us and steal their camels;" and it was nearly eleven o'clock when we came in sight of a small town, at which they advised us to stop, as the sheich el Bellad was "a good man, and had a fine house, and would be glad to see us." Before we reached the village, our honest guides drove their camels into a field to eat the green corn, while they gathered a sufficient quantity to feed them during the night.

On arriving at the village, we had some difficulty in protecting ourselves from a pack of half-starved wolfish-looking dogs, who seemed determined to dispute our entrance; and on coming to the sheich's house, we found the gate closed for the night, and the inmates either fast asleep, or determined not to hear our knocking. Finding a quiet civil sort of knock of no use, each of the camel-drivers seized a large stone, and beat such a summons on the wooden gate, as must have awakened everybody in the neighbourhood, and quickly produced a remonstrance from within, and a demand who we were, and what we wanted. After a tedious parley, the heavy wooden bolts were withdrawn, and we were admitted into a large court, having buildings on three sides, and on the fourth a high wall, and the gate by which we had

entered. A mare and colt were going loose in the court, and a large white camel was fastened near a stone trough in the middle; the buildings were the same low flat-roofed cottages I have already described; and the whole place appeared poor enough. The sheich, a quiet-looking, grey-bearded, old Arab, did not appear very well pleased at having been disturbed; but he received us politely, saluted us after the Arab fashion, placing his hand on his forehead and then on his lips, bowing slightly, and conducted us to our apartment.

The place to which we were conducted by our host appeared to be a separate building from that in which he and his household lived; and consisted of a single apartment, about ten or twelve feet square, without any window, the light being admitted only by the door. The walls, which were composed of clay mixed with straw, were quite bare, and at one end of the apartment there was a raised bench of the same materials, called a *mastabbah*, about three feet high and four feet broad, covered with a mat. The moonlight shone through many openings in the roof of palm-leaves; and I soon discovered that the mat on which we were seated was literally swarming with fleas. I make it a rule to appear perfectly pleased and satisfied on such occasions; for I believe nothing can be more mortifying to a poor man than to

have the poverty, or even the dirtiness, of his house noticed, when he is doing all in his power to appear hospitable; and certainly nothing can be more ungracious on the part of those who are receiving his hospitality; but I got a little impatient of our host's inquiries—who we were? where we came from? whither we were going? why we travelled on foot, &c.; and begged to represent that we were exceedingly hungry, and that anything in the shape of supper would be very acceptable.

After waiting another weary half hour, a tray was set before us with a dish of eggs fried in oil, flaps of coarse bread, and a lump of hard salt curd, which was called cheese. As I was very hungry, and not quite so fastidious as my companions, I contrived to make a tolerably hearty meal; and, having closed the door, and made our servant sleep inside the threshold, we stretched ourselves on the mat. The intolerable snoring of my two companions, the groaning and grunting of the camels outside, and the "industrious fleas," prevented my enjoying one moment's rest. At the first glimmering of dawn, I roused the whole party; and, having taken leave of the sheich, who came to receive his *backsheesh*, we were once more on the road.

There was a keen frosty feeling in the air, which was beautifully clear. The landscape

around us was very similar to what we had seen the preceding day; but, in the distance, appeared part of Gebel Mokuttam, and the Pyramids of Ghiseh. I did not break out into any enthusiastic raptures at the first sight of the Pyramids; for indeed there was nothing at all impressive in their appearance. They looked rather diminutive; but the clearness of the atmosphere deceived me as to their height and distance; for although they seemed to be within three or four miles of us, we had a smart walk of five hours before we reached the Nile opposite to Boulak.

We had left the camels and luggage to be brought on by our servant; and, having crossed the river to Boulak, which is the port of Cairo on the Nile, we took donkeys and trotted on to the city.

It was some days before I quite got rid of the excitement and whirl of ideas which one feels on arriving in a great city, where everything—climate, architecture, costume, language, manners—is so new and so strange. I had an odd feeling too, that, somehow or other, the scene was not quite new; the buildings and people seemed to revive some forgotten impression, like the recollection of a dream; and I could almost fancy that I recognised faces among the crowd of bearded and turbaned strangers around me. There was not the same mixture, as at Alexandria, of Frank dresses

with the Oriental costumes; and although the natives do not stare at strangers, which rather surprised me, I did feel a little ashamed of my ungraceful and, in their eyes, indecorous costume.

For the first two days I did nothing but ramble through the streets and bazaars. At the different mosques, and at every public fountain, I found a continually varying succession of living pictures; every group conversing in the street—every old Turk seated cross-legged on the floor of his little shop—was a study: and I longed for our friend William Allan, or for a portion of his talent, that I might convey to you some more correct impression of these tableaux than my meagre description can give.

The streets in general are narrow and intricate, especially in the Jews' quarter, where some of the passages barely admit of two persons passing each other. The windows, with curiously carved wooden lattices, project so much on either side, as nearly to meet overhead, and exclude much of the light; and although this produces a useful and agreeable shade from the sun, it gives a sombre and dismal appearance to those streets which contain only dwelling-houses. In these streets very few passengers are seen; but in the bazaars and great thoroughfares, there is a continual stream of Turks, Copts, Jews, Dervishes, and Bedaweens

from the Desert, in their picturesque and graceful costumes.

The Musreyeen, as the inhabitants call themselves, are a good-looking race of men; about the middle height, robust, and well-proportioned; with fine open foreheads, and a half-smiling expression about the mouth, which is rather prepossessing. It is quite extraordinary how the poor little children that one sees, with meagre skinny limbs, and great distended abdomens, ever acquire the well-built muscular frame displayed by the young men.

The number of blind men, or men blind of one eye, is by no means so great as one would expect from the description given by some late travellers, but they are certainly numerous. Many suffer from ophthalmia and other diseases, and the practice of mothers extirpating the right eye of their male children, to unfit them for military service, has prevailed to a lamentable extent. The Pacha has tried many plans to put a stop to this shocking practice; and has now, I am told, adopted the ingenious one of raising two regiments of one-eyed soldiers, so that the conscription can no longer be evaded by this mutilation.

The dress of the women of the lower orders is simple enough, often consisting of no more than a loose chemise of blue cotton, with wide sleeves,

reaching a little below the knees, and open in front down to the waist. The old women are horrid disgusting-looking creatures,

"Beldames wither'd, auld, and droll;"

but many of the young girls have very handsome figures; and from carrying their water-pitchers on their heads, they acquire an erect and graceful gait.

Of the Egyptian ladies, you see little more than a huge mass of black silk and white muslin, shuffling along upon a pair of very wide yellow morocco boots. The dress, however, which they wear in the house is very rich and graceful. I have seen one which was presented to an English lady, who is here at present, by one of the pacha's daughters. I dare not attempt to describe the form of it, for of some parts I could hardly conjecture the use; but it was principally composed of fine scarlet cloth, and crimson satin, and was profusely embroidered with gold. Ladies are seldom seen on foot in the streets; but you occasionally meet a party of three or four mounted on asses, attended by their slaves, and preceded by a black eunuch, on their way to or from the bath, the great lounge of the Cairo gossips.

The veil worn by the Egyptian women is a long narrow piece of white muslin, suspended by a gold ornament from the upper part of the forehead,

and covering the nose and the lower half of the face: the eyes and part of the forehead being exposed. Their eyes are almost invariably very beautiful: of a long almond shape, black and brilliant; and their expression is considerably heightened by staining the eyelids with the black powder called *kohl;* and, as the rest of the features are concealed, one is at liberty to supply every fine pair of eyes with as beautiful a set of features as one's fancy can produce.

February 2.

The population of Cairo is about 220,000. Of these about 10,000 are Copts; between three and four thousand Jews; and the rest, with the exception of a few strangers from different countries, are Egyptian Mooslims.

There is a difference between the Coptish countenance and that of the Egyptian Mooslim, but it is scarcely perceptible to a stranger. The Copt is distinguished by a black or dark blue turban, or one of a grave drab colour. Their patriarch, although styled Patriarch of Alexandria, has his residence in Cairo, and is said to be very wealthy. He is chosen by lot from among the monks of the convent of St. Anthony. With the exception of a few who adhere to the Greek Church, they are of the sect called Jacobites, or Eutychians, from

Jacobus Baradæus, the great propagator of the Eutychian doctrines; and are more bigoted, and more bitter in their hatred of Christians of every denomination, than even the Mooslims themselves. The Coptic is now a dead language; and is only preserved in the religious books; the Arabic being spoken by the Copts, as by the Mooslims, and taught in their schools.

The Jews inhabit the worst quarter of Cairo; a labyrinth of dark narrow lanes, in which it is hardly possible for two persons to pass. They are a miserable, sickly-looking race; dirty and slovenly in their dress, with sore eyes, and bloated faces; occasioned, it is said, by the grossness of their food, in which they use great quantities of oil.

Under the government of Mehemet Ali, the Jews and Copts enjoy much greater tranquillity than formerly; and, in fact, the equal protection afforded to all persons, of whatever religion, is one great cause of the unfavourable feeling with which the rigid Mooslims regard the present government. It is not many years since no Christian or Jew dared to ride in the city of Cairo; and there were some of the mosques — El Azhar and El Khasaneyn—before which they were not permitted to pass; but now, protection is not only extended to the Copt and Jew, but a Protestant mission has been established in Cairo, and the service of the

Church of England is publicly performed every Sunday. The boys from the missionary school attend the public service in the chapel; and, I was told, that several of them were the children of Mooslim parents, who are induced to send them to the school that they may acquire the English language, which is becoming an important accomplishment. Indeed there can be little doubt that the toleration of the Pacha's government has had a considerable effect in relaxing the bigotry of the mass of the population, and is undermining the foundations of Mahommedism.

It is a matter of some difficulty, and even a little danger, for an inexperienced stranger to thread his way through this labyrinth of narrow and crowded streets; for should his attention be attracted for a moment by some passing novelty, he runs a considerable risk of being ridden over or knocked down by the loaded camels, which sometimes meet one rather abruptly at a corner. It is true, he gets timely intimation of his danger; but the exclamations of "*Darak ya khowaga!—riglak! shemalak!* *" convey no more intelligible warning to his ear, than the confused hubbub of other sounds, by which he is at all times surrounded.

The bazaars are the gayest and most amusing

* Your back! Oh! Sir—your leg! to the right!

part of the city. The shop is a small apartment, or rather cell, the floor of which is raised about three feet above the footway, projecting a little way into the street, and is covered with a carpet and cushions, on which the shopkeeper sits. On making some purchases during the first few days after my arrival here, I was allowed to stand in the street while the shopkeeper showed his wares; but I have been frequently accompanied, of late, by Khanafee Ismael, an Egyptian, who was educated, and spent some years, in England; and on these occasions I have always been invited to seat myself on the carpet, while the shopkeeper hands me his pipe, and sends to the nearest coffee-shop for a small pot of coffee.

Ismael is manager of one of the Pacha's manufactories, and well known in the bazaars; and, as he is a most obliging good-natured man, and speaks English perfectly well, he is a most useful acquaintance. I find, too, that we have many mutual friends in Scotland, which is, of course, a great bond of union between us.

The bazaar appears to be the great place of gossip for the men, as the bath is for the ladies. Here the merchants receive visits; and it is customary to spend an hour, sometimes a whole afternoon, in one of their shops, chatting over the passing events and gossip of the day.

The Pacha's manufacturing speculations appear to be a complete failure: not that the articles made are very inferior in quality, but produced at an expense far above that at which they might be imported from England. I have seen a great deal of the cloth woven at the power-loom factory here. Both the spinning and weaving are bad; and, notwithstanding the low price of labour, the cost of production is so great that the cloth can scarcely be sold in the bazaars, and is almost entirely used in clothing the soldiers. The climate is exceedingly unfavourable to the working of any fine machinery, as it is impossible to exclude the dust and fine sand. The machinery is quickly deteriorated by the increased and irregular friction; and it is impossible to obtain that degree of moisture which is indispensable for many parts of the process of spinning and weaving. Nor is it possible to obtain, in a factory of this kind, the same systematic niceness and economy of management as under the superintendence of the parties immediately interested in the profit to be realised. In fact, from the extensive competition which exists in England, great part of the manufacturer's profit arises from his economy of management; almost the only advantage he can gain over his competitors in trade, is the discovery of some method by which he may be able to reduce his cost of

production; and it is probable that Mehemet Ali will before long discover that it is more profitable to export the whole of his cotton, and to receive manufactured goods from us. The whole system is a bad one for the country. The people will only improve in manufactures when they come to have a direct interest in them, and are stimulated by competition with each other.

The same remarks apply to all the Pacha's speculations of this kind. Carpets, in imitation of the fabrics of England and France, are produced at a price far above the value of those of Turkey and Persia; and have, as yet, only been made for the Pacha himself; as in fact they could not be sold in the bazaars. An engineer in the service of Ibrahim Pacha told me, that having to construct a small railroad at the coal-mines in Mount Libanus, the rails were sent from the government foundry at Boulak, charged at the rate of 40*l.* per ton—about four times the price at which they might have been imported from England.

Ibrahim Pacha has always seen the folly of these speculations, and has often remonstrated with his father on the subject; and it is generally believed that his improvements will turn out more beneficial to the country, and more profitable to himself. I have seen a good deal of a countryman

of ours, from Jamaica, who is employed by Ibrahim in the superintendence of a large sugar-plantation on the Nile. He is a shrewd sensible man, and appears to augur well of the undertaking, which is more suitable to the country and climate than any of the old Pacha's schemes. Ibrahim has also cleared a large tract of land, between Cairo and the island of Roda, which a few years ago was covered with ruins and rubbish; and it is now planted with two hundred thousand olive-trees, which will in a short time yield a considerable annual revenue. I have heard the profit calculated at a dollar per ton, or about 30,000*l.* per annum.

The gardens at Roda are managed by two Scotchmen, Mr. Trail and Mr. M'Culloch, and are very extensive and beautiful. I cannot say that I take very great delight in "trim gardens," and shall not attempt to describe them. I was pleased with the appearance of the young gardeners, of whom upwards of two hundred are employed. They are lodged, clothed, fed, and taught to read, and are allowed a dollar per month; and their gay, clean dress, and healthy cheerful occupation, form a very agreeable contrast to the poverty and squalor of the common labouring Arabs.

The gardens of Mehemet Ali at Shubra are even more stiff, trim, and formal, than those of

Roda, where somewhat of English taste has been introduced. There were at Shubra abundance of trellised arbours and marble fountains, and long walks paved with mosaic-work of black and white pebbles, and shaded from the sun by an arcade of luxuriant foliage. But the place appeared deserted; and solitude becomes a mere weariness amid so much art. Our footsteps echoed with a melancholy sound along the paved walks; and the groups of gaily-dressed ladies, whose appearance you thought so incongruous amid the wild solitudes of the Trossachs, were sadly wanted to enliven the gardens of Shubra.

These gardens, as well as those at Roda, are intersected by numerous small canals. The principal ones are of hewn stone, but the subordinate branches are merely cut with the spade; and from these the water is made to overflow, or diverted into new channels, by damming them up with the foot*.

The establishment of military hospitals and schools of medicine is an improvement for which the country is much indebted to Mehemet Ali; and it may be hoped that from these schools, which are said to be well conducted, public hospitals will

* The land whither thou goest is not as the land of Egypt, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot as a garden of herbs.—Deut. xi. 10.

arise of a more general character. The only institution of this kind is the public madhouse, and nothing can be worse than the system there pursued. The treatment of the patients in that asylum is such as no civilised being can witness without shuddering. Insanity is considered as an immediate visitation from Heaven; and, where the sufferer is inoffensive, it often procures for him a superstitious reverence from the Mooslims; but as the frantic and dangerous must be restrained, and as insanity is looked on as incurable, those who are unhappily in this condition are treated merely as dangerous animals. I never saw a more painful or revolting spectacle than the madhouse of Cairo; and although it would be hardly just to censure the government too severely for a state of things which, not very many years ago, prevailed in our own country, it will reflect little credit on the European physicians who have access to the Pacha, if something be not done to ameliorate the condition of these unhappy lunatics.

This madhouse forms a part of a mosque, but my attention was so occupied with the wretched inmates, and I left the place with such feelings of disgust, that I took little note of the building.

I was shown into a spacious and lofty stone hall, having a row of cells, or rather dens, on each side, with strong iron gratings in front.

Each of these dens contained a creature, more like a wild beast than a human being, secured by an iron chain, one end of which was attached to a collar round his neck, and the other fastened into the wall on the outside of the grating. As soon as we entered, half-a-dozen hands, each holding an empty pipe, were thrust through the gratings; and we were assailed with petitions for tobacco, in every variety of imploring whine, insolent demand, and downright imprecation. They are allowed to smoke, because being surrounded, and separated, by stone and iron, although they may set fire to their straw and clothes, they cannot set fire to the house. When I saw one frantic creature, half naked, his head and beard unshaven and matted with dirt, sitting on his heels, grinning horribly, and shaking the iron bars with both his hands, I could scarcely believe that I was looking at a human being. There is no medical attendance, because it is considered useless; and the place is in every respect like a collection of wild beasts, except that I never saw any menagerie where the animals were so unspeakably filthy, or had so little freedom of motion. I assure you it was some time before my nerves recovered from the shock, and the horrid sounds were ringing in my ears the whole evening.

In the slave-market I saw nothing to excite any painful feeling, in so far as the physical condition of the slaves is concerned. The black slaves, boys and girls, from perhaps ten or twelve to fifteen or sixteen years of age, all appeared very healthy, and quite cheerful. They were all anxious to be sold, and thrust out their tongues to show their good health. Indeed, domestic slaves are very well treated and taken care of. They are generally purchased young, and seldom resold, unless for some serious misconduct.

The black slaves are kept in apartments on the ground floor of the khan in which the market is held; and in a gallery above, are the rooms in which the Abyssinian and Circassian women are kept secluded from the public gaze; and where Franks are rarely admitted. Those Abyssinian girls whom I saw, had regular and rather pretty features, and might have been considered beautiful, in spite of their copper complexion. Their forms were delicate and graceful, and there was an expression of thoughtful melancholy on their countenances, which may have arisen from some feeling of their degraded condition; but I rather think it is a national characteristic.

The palace of Mehemet Ali is at the citadel, which occupies a commanding position overlooking the town. It contains nothing very worthy

of remark, except one or two fine apartments, sadly disfigured by the bad taste of their decorations, which are in the worst style of modern French house-painting. The view, however, is very fine. Below lies the great city, with its majestic domes, and hundreds of graceful minarets; and from this height you see that, instead of being one confused maze of narrow streets, Cairo contains many gardens, and open spaces; some of which become lakes during the inundation. Beyond the city, the Nile is seen winding majestically through its green and fertile vale; a little to the left, slumbering amid the silence of the Desert, lie the sepulchres of the khaleefs; and westward the Pyramids of Ghizeh rear their giant heads into the blue unclouded sky.

Mehemet Ali is building a mosque in the citadel, on the site, and partly from the materials, of the palace of Saladun. It is to contain a mausoleum, in which he will be buried; he fears, perhaps, that, "after life's fitful fever," he may not sleep well in his sepulchre among the Memlook Beys.

I have made several unsuccessful attempts to see the famous magician, whose performances have astonished and puzzled so many English visitors to Cairo; but he has shut himself up under pretence of being engaged in some mysterious course of study and meditation; and no persuasion will

induce him to hold any intercourse with us infidels. I suspect he will turn out to be no great conjuror after all. It appears that the person who first introduced him to English travellers was one Osman, a renegade Scotchman, and at one time, I believe, dragoman to the English consulate. At his house travellers generally lodged before the establishment of the present hotel; and he acted as interpreter at these magical exhibitions. From his knowledge of English costume and manners, and probably from his acquaintance with the personal appearance of some of our public men, he was, to say the least, well qualified to act as confederate with the Sheich Abd' el Kader, the magician.

It is rather a suspicious circumstance that, after the death of Osman, which took place about a year ago, the sheich began to blunder most egregiously; he then became more unwilling to exhibit; and now refuses to visit the English who are here on any terms.

I think I said already that I felt none of those enthusiastic raptures, in which travellers sometimes indulge, at the first sight of the Pyramids. As you approach them, however, their vastness and the grand simplicity of their form produce an effect on the mind, which becomes more impressive the longer you remain in their neighbourhood.

It was with a certain feeling of awe that I looked upward from the base of the great pyramid of Cheops, and not with a perfectly composed mind that I began the ascent; and yet there is neither difficulty nor danger in the enterprise to a person of tolerably firm nerves. I would not advise any one to attempt it, however, who has any tendency to that feeling of giddiness with which some people are affected on looking down from a height. One gentleman who was with me became nervous and alarmed, after getting over about a fourth of the ascent; and coming down again appeared to be a much more difficult and perilous affair with him than going up.

I did take the precaution of having two Arabs, of whom a great many came to offer their services, to assist me in the ascent; but I found afterwards that I might have done quite well without them, except that their assistance somewhat lessened the fatigue. It is hard work, for the steps are from three to four feet in height; and I was fain to stop once or twice by the way to take breath.

The summit which, from a distance, appears to taper to a point, is a platform of about twenty feet square, with a broken irregular surface, as if the pyramid had been left unfinished. The view from the top is very extensive, and presents a singular and impressive scene: on one hand, the

Libyan Desert stretching away, waste over waste, herbless and lifeless, as far as the eye can reach; on the other, the green valley of Egypt, with its magnificent river, and villages, and groves of date-trees; to the south are seen the pyramids of Saccara and Dashour; and the Sphinx raises her head above the sands below.

This is one of the places which one ought to visit alone, to enjoy the full influence of the scene undisturbed. I went with three young Englishmen, officers on leave of absence from Corfu. One object of great importance with them was, to ascend in the shortest possible time to the summit, and, having arrived there, to bet on their agility in descending again. Their elevation above the rest of the world seemed to put them in very high spirits; and I felt a little nervous when I thought of the possibility of a fall from our airy little platform; for, although I felt perfectly confident of my own safety, I could not divest my mind of the feeling that my companions were occasionally in danger. There is something very exciting, exhilarating to the spirits, in standing on a little unprotected piece of pavement, at this height of 480 feet above the earth. You feel an extraordinary buoyancy and lightness of spirit, as if you could really float away, self-poised, into the surrounding air; and, although I felt no inclination to try the

experiment, which some very nervous persons are said to experience, I can easily imagine the idea taking such firm possession of the mind that the temptation might at last become irresistible.

I was the last of the party to leave the summit, and at the first difficult point in the descent, where the stone on which I stood was about eighteen inches broad, and the next step about four feet deep, my two Arabs suddenly withdrew their assistance, and gave me to understand that, unless I chose to pay them a handsome *baksheesh* then and there, I might make up my mind to sit where I was, "like Patience on a monument," or to get down the best way I could. These continual importunities for "*baksheesh! baksheesh!*" are at all times most annoying and irritating; but in the present instance it was intolerable, and I felt a great inclination to kick the fellows "down stairs." I contented myself, however, with telling them to go, and began to scramble down alone, which they no sooner saw than they returned to their duty; very wisely calculating, I suppose, that their chance of any *baksheesh* would depend on my reaching the ground in safety.

So many descriptions and plans of the interior of this pyramid have already been published, that I rather refer you to them, if you are curious on the subject, than attempt to describe it myself.

To tell the truth, I could give you no intelligible description, without referring to these published accounts; and I question much if nine-tenths of the travellers who visit the pyramid of Cheops know much more of the plan of the interior than they did before entering it. But it is something *to say* that you have been in the interior of the great pyramid; and those who are too scrupulous to adopt the advice of old Sheridan, must, of course, *do it*, if they mean *to say it*.

The entrance is at the sixteenth step, on the northern face. Having provided myself with a candle, I entered the dark narrow passage, which inclines downwards, at an angle of 27° for 260 feet, and terminates at a large hall, excavated in the rock, and under the centre of the pyramid. From this hall I ascended by a similar passage to what is called the Grand Gallery, then to another hall called the Queen's, and then to a third called the King's Chamber, in which the sarcophagus stands. I could see and wonder at the immense blocks of granite with which these chambers are constructed; and could feel that the passages were lined with finely polished slabs of the same material, so smooth and slippery as to render one's progress through them difficult; but, with the faint light of two small candles, which could only illuminate a few square yards of any part at a time, and without any

instruments for measuring or indicating the direction of the passages, I could, of course, form a very imperfect idea of the plan.

When I tell you, that the solid contents of this pyramid have been estimated at seventy millions of cubic feet, you may imagine how small a proportion the chambers and passages already discovered bear to the whole mass.

As to the puzzling questions, When?. By whom were the pyramids built?—that is "too hard a knot for me to untie," and I dare say you do not expect me to attempt the solution of it. Lord Lindsay would date their erection before the days of Abraham; but I do not think his argument very conclusive.

There is good reason for believing that they are not native Egyptian structures, but the work of those nomade tribes known in history as the shepherd kings. They are not found in the Thebais, but only in those districts which were subjugated by these royal shepherds; and they contain none of those elaborate paintings, and sculptures, and hieroglyphic inscriptions, which distinguish the Egyptian temples and royal sepulchres. It is true that the shepherd-kings were expelled before the administration of Joseph, who rose to so distinguished a place in the management of public affairs, under a monarch of the restored Egyptian

dynasty; but the country was subjected to another incursion of the nomade shepherds, who again established themselves in Lower Egypt, after the death of Joseph, and forced the native monarch to retire to the Thebais, whither he was followed by the priests and a portion of the people. Then arose that "other king, who knew not Joseph," and under whom the children of Israel suffered that hard bondage recorded in the sacred history.

Admitting, therefore, that Lord Lindsay is correct in attributing the erection of the pyramids to the shepherd-kings, it still remains to be proved, whether they were built during their first or second possession of the country; and it is just as possible that the children of Israel may have been employed in their construction, during that bitter servitude, when they were made to "labour in brick and in mortar, and in all manner of work in the field;" and when they "built for Pharaoh treasure-cities, Pithom and Raamses;" as that they existed in the time of Abraham.

I must confess, that any probability of the children of Israel having laboured in rearing these mysterious structures, would invest them with a deeper interest in my eyes than their mere antiquity could awaken.

The sphinx is, I think, a very impressive object; and, although the features are mutilated and

weather-beaten, it is still a very expressive countenance, and no mean evidence of the state of the arts at the time it was executed. The expression is calm, dignified, and very pleasing; and I think it is scarcely possible to look at so gigantic a human countenance, amid the silence and wild solitude of the desert, without some feeling of awe. The excavations made at different times around it have long since been filled up by the sand; and the large tomb discovered by Colonel Vyse will soon be submerged also. I could not descend into it, as the ropes and ladders have either been purposely removed, or stolen by the Arabs.

I have been so fortunate as to meet with Mr. David Roberts, with many of whose works you are well acquainted. He returned two or three months ago from Upper Egypt, with a splendid collection of drawings, which it would delight your eyes to look over; and he is now preparing to travel, by way of Mount Sinai and Petra, into Palestine. He will be accompanied by Mr. Pell, whom you may remember as one of Lord Lindsay's party to Palmyra, and Khanafee Ismael, whom I mentioned in my last letter.

I have been invited to join this party; and, although I had no intention when I left home of undertaking such a journey as this, I have agreed to accompany them. Petra is an object of very

great interest; the party is a very agreeable one, and all the circumstances are more than usually advantageous. Mr. Roberts and Mr. Pell are both experienced travellers in the East; and Ismael, from his accurate knowledge of the English and Arabic languages, and his acquaintance with the manners of the Arabs, will prove a most useful companion. As for the dangers of a journey through the deserts of Arabia-Petræa, I make a considerable deduction from the actual perils of the way, on the score of travellers' tales; and for the fatigue and privations we are likely to encounter, I believe I am able to endure all that others have endured before me. The danger to be apprehended from the Fellaheen of Wady Mousa has, in all probability, been exaggerated; for it is the interest of the Alloeen sheich, who has conducted travellers to Petra, to magnify the danger as much as possible, for the purpose of enhancing the value of his own services and protection. It is true that neither Mr. Stephens nor Lord Lindsay was allowed to stay more than a day in the valley of Petra: but as they were hurried away by the Alloeens, and never saw any of the Fellahs, we do not know whether these modern Edomites may not be as open to negotiation as the Bedaween tribes around them. At all events, we shall probably have an opportunity of trying the experiment, as

we are resolved to remain some days in Petra if possible.

The sheich of the Owlad Sayd, the most considerable of the Torate, or Sinaite tribes, is expected here every day, with a party to guide and escort us as far as Akaba, at the head of the eastern gulf, where we expect to find the Alloeens.

5th February.

Since the arrival of our Bedaween friends, I have become as impatient as they are to leave this place. Without a thorough acquaintance with the language it is impossible, and, even with that advantage, it is difficult to see much of the people. The state of public morals is very low, and cannot be otherwise, under the sensual and degrading influence of Mahommedism. The people may complain of the oppression of the government, but a vile spirit of tyranny, every man over his inferior, appears to pervade all classes. Servants are kicked and cuffed by their masters, labourers by their employers, and donkey-boys by everybody. I have seen a tradesman bastinado his apprentice on the soles of his feet with a bamboo, in a way that made my flesh creep. The poor boy screamed most piteously; but the other lads in the shop continued their work quite unconcerned, and people passing by scarcely turned their heads to see what

was the matter. I am sorry to say, that Englishmen are too ready to use the stick on very slight provocation; and I have been told, again and again, that there is no other way of managing an Arab; and that if I do not beat my servant now and then, he will soon be of no use to me. I have no faith in this, but believe that kind treatment will be returned by good service here as elsewhere; and, at all events, I shall try the experiment. I often wish that the knaves would retaliate, and strike again like men; but they are an abject, degraded race, and crouch like spaniels under the rod.

The household slave, although he may receive an occasional box on the ear, or a cut over the shoulders with the *koorbadj*, is generally well treated. His master has too direct an interest in his health to treat him very ill, and his duties are not more laborious than those of a domestic servant ought to be. Indeed I have seen slaves who appeared to have little else to do than to fill their master's pipe, and present it to him or his visitors. The sais, or groom, seems to have pretty hard work, as he has not only to attend to his horses in the stable, but to run alongside of his master when he rides out; and at whatever rate the effendee may choose to ride, the sais must either keep up with him, or contrive to overtake him when he slackens his pace.

The black eunuchs in the service of persons of distinction, are the most intolerable, insolent, swaggering puppies you ever saw. They are always handsomely dressed; and, in the streets, they "keep the cantle o' the causeway," and care no more for an English *khowaga* than for a water-carrier or a donkey-boy.

Two days ago, as Captain L—— was walking slowly towards the hotel, he was overtaken by the carriage of Abbas Pacha, the governor; an old-fashioned French chariot, drawn by four horses, driven by an Arab coachman, with two or three Arab footmen sticking on behind, and a dozen or two running on foot on each side—altogether a very odd-looking turn-out. On this occasion it contained some of the ladies of the governor's family, and was preceded by a black eunuch, who, thinking that the giaour did not move quickly enough out of the way, gave him a smart cut across the shoulders with his *koorbadj* *. But, alas! for poor blackie, the Englishman possessed a weapon of the power of which an Oriental has no idea. The Captain's fists hit right and left on the Nubian's head and chest, in a shower of blows, from which he in vain attempted to defend himself with his whip; and he received a pretty severe punishment before the crowd began to collect, and the

* A whip made of hippopotamus hide.

Captain thought it prudent to retreat into the hotel. Having taken the punishment of the personal insult into his own hands, he went to the consulate and desired that an apology for the national insult should be demanded from the governor himself; and, in reply to the message of the consul, his excellency said that if Captain L—— would come to the Serai next day, and point out the offender, he should be bastinadoed until the Captain, and any friend he might bring with him, were satisfied. Next day, accordingly, the party proceeded to the house of Abbas Pacha; the servants were paraded before them, and the aggressor identified; but, however severely our countryman might have punished him on the spot, and in the irritation of the moment, he had too much good feeling to stand by and see him beaten during his pleasure. After the first two or three blows with the stick his feelings relented, and he declared himself satisfied.

The sheich, and fifteen Bedaweens of the Owlad Sayd, arrived here to-day, and are bivouacked in the court of Mr. Pell's house. I am very much pleased with their appearance. They are fine, erect, straight-limbed men, with pleasing features, and an expression of frank good-humour in their animated countenances, which has quite won my confidence. Their costume is somewhat wild and

salvage, as Dugald Dalgetty calls it, but certainly the most picturesque I have yet seen. It consists of a coarse white shirt, with loose sleeves, reaching to the knee, and gathered round the waist by a leathern girdle; over this is worn the abbek, a large mantle of woollen stuff, striped in broad alternate bands of brown and white. Their legs and feet are naked, but the sheich and one or two of the men wear sandals of fish-skin. The head-dress is a kerchief of red, green, and yellow striped cotton, having the fringe twisted into a number of long tassels. It is folded diagonally and thrown over the head, leaving one corner hanging down behind, and the other two falling in fine picturesque folds over the neck and shoulders. A twisted fillet of dark-coloured worsted is wound about the head, over the *keffieh*, as this head-gear is called. They are all armed with a broad crooked knife, about eighteen inches long, a formidable-looking weapon, and very antique-looking matchlock guns, ornamented with shells and pieces of mother-of-pearl

Sheich Hussein is a fine-looking old man, and very courteous in his manners. He was once renowned as a warrior and hunter; and, although time has grizzled his beard, and tamed a little his fiery spirit, his eye has lost none of its brightness; and there is an independent bearing about him

which shows that he is still able, if need were, to lead his tribe to battle among the fastnesses of his native Desert.

The whole party are impatient to start, and appear, like honest Hobbie Elliot, to have a great dislike to stay among "ranks o' stane houses," and a sovereign contempt for all who dwell in them. We are as anxious to be off as they are; but our letters from Abbas Pacha to the Governor of Akaba have not arrived from the citadel, and we are very unwillingly detained another day.

It is impossible to say what opportunities I may have of writing on the journey; but I shall not neglect any that do occur. It is possible, however, that I may find no means of despatching a letter until my arrival in Syria; so that you need not be surprised if you receive none for a couple of months. You shall then have my journal up to the day when I write.

We shall all wear the Arab costume, both on account of its superior comfort and convenience in travelling, and because Sheich Hussein declares that the Frank dress is an abomination in the eyes of the Bedaween.

LETTER III.

Commencement of journey across the Desert—Deceptio visûs—Suez—Ruins of Serabat el Chadem—Valley: panic of its inhabitants—Mounts Sinai and Horeb—Convent and monks—Approach to the Red Sea—Arrival at Akaba—Change of escort.

Akaba, 1 *March* 1899.

MY DEAR ——,

WE arrived here on the 27th ultimo, all in good health and spirits; and as Sheich Hussein, the Beni Sayd, returns directly to Cairo, I entrust this letter to him. He promises to deliver it at the Consulate, and I hope it will reach you in due time.

We left Cairo on the 7th February. Mr. Roberts and I started together, from his house, about three o'clock in the afternoon, and were first at our place of rendezvous outside the Bab-en-Nasr gate. I wish Sir David, or Allan, had been there to see. We would have made a good subject for them.

A little way beyond the gate there is an old cemetery, with a half-ruined mosque, and domes and minarets, fast mouldering away under the

influence of time and the sand drifts from the Desert. Here, in front of the tombs, sat our Bedaween guides, their long matchlock guns resting across their knees, and maintaining a most exemplary gravity and silence. Near them lay the baggage camels, loaded with our tent, water-skins, luggage, &c.; and at a little distance stood Salem and Sayd, our Arab servants, holding our saddled dromedaries; while Roberts and I, seated on the corner of a ruined inclosure, were surrounded by a crowd of shrill-voiced little Arabs begging for *baksheesh*.

At length a crowd of ragged boys issuing from the gate announced the approach of Mr. Pell's division of the party; and we at last started, with some reasonable hope that no further delay would occur. We had scarcely passed the cemetery, however, when an accident happened which might have been attended with very serious consequences, and delayed our journey most unpleasantly.

One of our Cairo acquaintances had ridden thus far to see us off; and, at taking leave, and attempting to shake hands with Mr. Roberts, his dromedary got frightened by the horse, bolted off, and began to plunge in a violent and rather alarming manner. It would puzzle a good horseman to keep his seat on one of these brutes when they get restive; and I expected every moment

to see our friend pitched among the broken walls and loose stones, where he could hardly have escaped some serious injury. In the midst of his violent exertions the girth broke, and saddle and rider came to the ground, fortunately, on a piece of clear sand. He got a severe shake, however, and narrowly escaped a kick from the vicious brute after he was down.

Another dromedary was procured for Mr. Roberts; and, with all these delays, we had made but a short day's journey, when we encamped for the night under the low barren hills at the entrance of the Desert of Suez.

I cannot say that I slept very comfortably this first night in our tent. I have brought a *segaddeh*, a small prayer carpet, which serves me as a bed by night, a saddle all the day; and besides the hardness of my couch, it was bitterly cold; and I began to envy my friend Roberts a little the comfortable mattress, blankets, sheets, and pillows with which he had provided himself. I have now got quite accustomed to it, and feel very independent of the luxury of a regular bed.

On the morning of the 8th we found some new arrangements to make in the distribution of the baggage among the camels; and it was seven o'clock before we got everything shaken into its right place, and had started again on our journey.

The morning was cold and rather cloudy; and the barren red rocks, and wide expanse of cold grey sand and gravel, offered but a cheerless and dispiriting prospect. Skeletons, and half-consumed bodies, of camels began to mark the regular route of the large caravans; and here and there we passed small cairns of stones, scarcely covering the bones of those pilgrims who had sunk under sickness or the fatigue of the journey.

In the evening we encamped in a sandy hollow, where there was some appearance of vegetable life —low prickly shrubs and tufts of arid grass, on which the camels were turned loose to feed.

Next morning (9th), as Mr. Roberts and I were riding together, a little ahead of the party, our attention was suddenly arrested by a singular phenomenon, which you have often heard described, but which I scarcely expected so soon to witness.

Between us and the southern range of barren hills, and apparently three or four miles to the east, lay a beautiful lake, with the trees, on its banks and on a small island, distinctly reflected in its clear and placid waters. It continued for nearly an hour, without any greater alteration than might have arisen from our change of place as we rode forward, when it gradually became less defined, and at last vanished altogether, leaving only

a thin grey vapour floating over the place where it had appeared.

Heavy dark clouds had been gathering all the forenoon above the western horizon, and before two o'clock had gradually overspread the whole sky up to the zenith. The air was perfectly still and motionless, and everything portended a storm. Our Bedaweens, however, thought otherwise; and, when we proposed to pitch the tents, assured us that there would be no storm—Inshallah! not a drop of rain, that there never was rain at this season. But the Arabs are not accustomed to sudden changes of weather. The seasons are so regular and uniform, that they are not led to watch the appearance of the sky and clouds, like the shepherds in our variable climate; and in the present case, they were quite out in their reckoning.

One or two bright streaks of lightning shooting across the black mass of clouds, and a distant peal or two of thunder, warned us that there was no time to be lost, and we ordered the tents to be pitched. We were just too late. A cold, dismal wind came *sughing* over the Desert, and soon increased to such a breeze, that the tents could not be got up without great difficulty; a few large heavy drops fell, and were sucked up by the arid ground; and in a minute the storm burst upon us in the most tremendous rain, thunder and lightning, I ever witnessed.

Everything was in confusion. It blew a gale of wind, and, the tents not half secured, were flapping about as if they would have been carried away altogether. To add to the comfort of our situation, we had all the work to do; for the Arabs seemed so taken by surprise, and suffered so much from the cold, that they were nearly useless to us. After holding on by the wet canvas till our hands were benumbed, and we were thoroughly drenched, the tent was at last secured; and when we had lighted a charcoal fire to dry and warm ourselves, the Bedaweens came creeping in beside us, shivering and rattling their teeth as if they had had the ague.

The rain continued unabated for two hours, when the sky gradually cleared up, and we had a beautiful evening; but from the quantity of rain that had fallen, we had some difficulty in getting a fire kindled to cook our dinner.

When I looked out after the storm, the rain was running in a thousand little rills all around, glancing in the moonlight, and settling in large pools in the hollows.

During the night the Desert had drunk up this plentiful supply of moisture, and the effects of the storm were only visible next morning in the numerous little channels made by the rain. One of the camels was unable to proceed, and died in

the course of the day, and we lost a couple of live fowls on which we were dependent for a dinner. It was necessary therefore that we should reach Suez as quickly as possible; and, after a ride of nine hours, we passed Adjeroud, a little to the north; and pushing on, arrived at Suez at five o'clock, having left the Bedaweens, with our tents and luggage, beside a ruined khan about a mile from the town.

We found the inn full of passengers from the Bombay steamer; but Mr. Hill very politely offered us his only unoccupied apartment, and provided us with an excellent dinner, and we slept very comfortably on the deewans round the room.

We were detained a few hours next morning to repair one of the tents, and to provide the necessary stores for our journey to Mount Sinai.

Adjeroud, which we passed yesterday a few miles to the north of Suez, is one of the fortresses at which stores are kept for the Hadgg caravan. It is supposed to be "Etham, on the verge of the wilderness," where the Israelites encamped when they had gone three days' journey out of Egypt. The situation, and the distance from the Nile, agree pretty well with the narrative of the Exodus; and, indeed, Adjeroud is now the third stage of the pilgrim caravan; but there is great difficulty in fixing this point, for the Gulf of Suez has un-

doubtedly extended farther north than at present. The local traditions are uncertain and conflicting; many places claim the honour of being the scene of each remarkable incident in the history of Israel's deliverance; and the names of places mentioned in the sacred narrative are now unknown in the country.

The most prevalent tradition fixes the miraculous passage of the Red Sea at Ras Ataka, a promontory extending into the gulf about fifteen miles below Suez; and, without pretending to a decided opinion on a question which cannot be determined with any certainty, my impression is, that though the Israelites may have crossed lower down, they could hardly have done so higher up the gulf than this point.

You may recollect, that what the children of Israel demanded of Pharaoh was, that they might go "three days' journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices;" and it was only when they began to move from their encampment at Etham, and when "it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled," that he determined to pursue them. He "overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon," a singularly difficult and perilous position, which they had been expressly commanded to occupy, for the purpose of inducing Pharaoh to follow them; "for Pharaoh

will say of the children of Israel, they are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in."

The word Pi-hahiroth signifies "the entrance of the valley;" and there appears to be some difference of opinion whether it was a proper name, or only a descriptive epithet; and the names, Migdol and Baal-zephon, are no longer known. The range of mountains along the western shore of the gulf is called Gebel Ataka; and the promontory, to which I have already alluded, Ras Ataka—names evidently commemorative of the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from their Egyptian pursuers*; and it is probable that the names mentioned in Scripture were superseded by others arising out of this extraordinary event, and have been in process of time altogether forgotten.

Had the Israelites marched in any other direction than along the narrow stretch of shore between the present Gebel Ataka and the sea, I cannot see how it could with any propriety have been said that they were "entangled in the land," or that the wilderness had shut them in. But here the entanglement was complete. On one hand were the mountains, on the other the sea; and when the Egyptian host pursued them into this cul-de-sac—for the promontory of Ras Ataka prevented their advancing to the south—they had

* The Arabic word Ataka signifies "deliverance."

no alternative, but to defend themselves in their disadvantageous position, or to march through the sea. In fact the Israelites, having no idea of this latter movement, gave themselves up for lost; "and they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?"

Now, as they were pursued by the Egyptians, it is evident that the van of the host of Israel, and consequently those who first entered the sea, were those farthest to the south; and when we consider the immense number of the Israelites, with their women and children and cattle, we must believe that their encampment extended many miles along the coast.

The remark of Niebuhr, that the Israelites could never have been so infatuated as to allow Moses to lead them blindfold to certain destruction, is hardly worth noticing, did it not offer an unintentional testimony to the truth of the inspired narrative; for this is the very conclusion to which it was intended that Pharaoh himself should be brought, viz., that they had marched into a position where their destruction was certain. "I will harden Pharaoh's heart that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh and upon all his host, that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord."

Having completed our preparations for the journey, we returned about noon to our encampment, where we found our people busy loading the camels, and Sheich Hussein impatient to be off.

Beside the circle of grey ashes left by the Arabs' fire sat a curious little naked creature, stretching out its small black hands over a few expiring embers, and looking more like a monkey than anything human. To our astonishment, we found that this child, which could not be more than twelve months old, for it could not even say "*baksheesh*," had been brought by our party from Cairo. Its father and mother, Arabs of the Owlad Sayd, had both died in Cairo some months before; and one of the Bedaweens who were with us, having adopted the little girl, was carrying her to their tents at Gebel Tor. That she should have survived the storm in the Desert of Suez was surprising enough; and now when we saw her stuffed, stark-naked, into a bag full of beans, to be jolted for seven or eight days on the back of a camel, we could not help expressing our fears of her ever arriving alive at Gebel Tor. The Bedawee, however, laughed at our fears; and, to say the truth, he appeared to be a very kind, though rather a rough nurse.

While passing round the head of the gulf we had a pretty stiff breeze from the north, with a

smart shower of sand and small gravel, which hit rather harder than was at all agreeable either to us or our dromedaries. They turned tail to it once or twice; and the Bedaweens, who appear to be very easily discomposed by such occurrences, proposed to stop and take shelter behind the camels; but we rode through it, and in the evening encamped in the wilderness of Shur.

The Desert here has a very different appearance from that of Suez, which presents an expanse of hard grey gravel, with here and there a few prickly shrubs. There the Desert appeared to me to be only dreary and monotonous; but here I felt impressed by the grandeur of the wild, solitary waste, surging away, sand hill over sand hill, all herbless and lifeless, as far as the eye could reach. Perhaps this might partly arise from having got rid of the common vulgar associations, by which the "overland" route to India has unromanced the Desert of Suez. It has become a regular high road, marked by carriage wheels, and furnished with three "stations," as they are called, where travellers may indulge in potations of Champagne or London porter. Sixty miles of bad road, with three very bad inns, where gentlemen in hats and pea-jackets drink bottled porter and smoke cheroots.

There was a sublimity in the desolation and

perfect solitude of the Desert here; no trace of man, not even the track of camels' feet in the sand: the recent footsteps of our own were behind us, and ended at our encampment, and all beyond was as if it had never been trodden.

> No palm-tree rose to spot the wilderness,
> The dark blue sky closed round,
> And rested like a dome,
> Upon the circling waste.

Everything about us too, the tents, the camels, the Bedaweens with their wild faces and picturesque costume, was in keeping with the scenery.

At night the camels, twenty in number, are made to kneel close to each other in a half circle, within which the bags of beans, pack-saddles, and other articles belonging to the Arabs, are piled together, forming a tolerable shelter for their bivouac.

In the morning we make the whole party start before us, keeping one servant, and one Bedawee as a guide; and, after drinking a cup of coffee and smoking a pipe, we overtake and pass the caravan; and as the baggage camels only travel between two and three miles an hour, we can always stop for an hour or two where there is anything to be seen or sketched, and overtake the party before the tents are pitched in the evening.

12th February.

After leaving our encampment this morning we again came in sight of the sea; and about nine o'clock arrived at Ayn Mousa—"the fountains of Moses"—where the Israelites are supposed to have landed on coming up out of the Red Sea. A few wild palm-trees, shaggy and unpruned, grow beside the wells, and form, I think, a more picturesque feature in the landscape than the date-trees of Egypt, with their long bare stems and tufted heads; though these too are very beautiful. The water has a brackish, unpleasant taste; but we were fain to replenish our skins with it, as our Nile water was expended, and we had found that of Suez quite undrinkable.

After leaving the Wells of Moses, we lost sight of the sea, which is always a refreshing object, and rode for hours through a dreary wilderness of sand, broken here and there into dry, gravelly hollows. We passed many dead camels, and many a "little hillock of mortality," small heaps of loose stones hardly covering the remains of pilgrims who have found a lonely grave in the Desert.

About sunset we reached Bir Howara, supposed to be the Mara of scripture, where we encamped. The well rises in a low sand-hill, and the ground about it is encrusted with salt. The water is

exceedingly bitter, and indeed cannot be drunk. The camels will not taste it, and when very thirsty they will drink the sea-water. I had the curiosity to taste it;—it is intensely bitter, and leaves a nauseous taste in the mouth for a long time. A short distance to the north of this well is a stream, or rather the dry bed of a stream, called Wady Amareh, which Burckhardt fixes on as the Mara of Scripture. It is about fifty miles from Suez, and the children of Israel may easily have wandered three days in the wilderness before they reached it.

We were now in the country of the Owlad Sayd, and Sheich Hussein no longer kept up the strict watch at night, which he had done on our journey from Cairo. He spoke much of the good character of his tribe; of the rarity of acts of dishonesty among them, and of the severity with which they were punished when they did occur.

Among other anecdotes, he told us, that some years ago, a Greek priest, who was travelling to Mount Sinai, with a single Arab of this tribe, died when they were within one day's journey of the convent. Had there been any witness of his death, the unfortunate Calloyer would have been buried in the sand, under one of those little cairns of stones which we frequently pass in the Desert; but his journey was known: the Bedawee had been

sent to Cairo to meet him, and might be suspected of having murdered his companion. He therefore placed the dead man upon his dromedary, and proceeded on his journey.

On his arrival at the convent, an investigation took place; the monks were satisfied that their expected visitor had died a natural death; and the Bedawee was allowed to depart, after delivering up the luggage, and everything belonging to the deceased.

"Dead men," they say, "tell no tales;" but in this instance the adage did not hold good; for in the pocket of their dead friend the monks found an inventory of the property he had with him; and on comparing the contents of his mails with this document, some articles were found to be missing. The suspicious circumstance was mentioned to the sheich, who arrived some time after at the convent. On his return to the encampment at Gebel Tor, a divan was held in the sheich's tent, to which the suspected Arab was summoned; and during his absence his own tent was searched, and there the stolen property was found, like the wedge of gold and the Babylonish garment of Achan, the son of Carmi, hid in the ground.

The thief was driven from the tribe, and went to Cairo: where he died soon after.

14th February.

We had now left the more open part of the Desert, and our route lay among narrow sandy valleys, between rugged precipitous crags of calcareous rock, mixed with beds of gravel and indurated sand. You can hardly imagine a more savage scene. The crags rose sometimes perpendicularly, like enormous walls, their summits riven and shattered into the most wild and fantastic forms; occasionally the valleys opened out wider, and high isolated masses of rock rose abruptly from the sand, curiously turreted and embattled, and having their naked sides worn and undermined by the drifting sand, as if they had been subjected to the action of a torrent. Nature has often been represented as smiling: here she might be said to wear a ghastly and frantic grin. No living thing was to be seen, except the little grey lizards that darted across our path, or lay basking in the burning sunshine on the stones: the air was hot and motionless, and the glare from the white rocks and sand became painful to the eyes. For the first time I began to feel the thirst rather distressing, and the water, being heated by the sun, and having already acquired a nauseous taste from the skins, afforded little refreshment.

How little do we think, in reading the history

of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness, of the trials and temptations to which they were exposed! Our minds are too apt to dwell on their rebellion and want of faith; their forgetfulness of the mighty signs and wonders which had so recently been wrought for their deliverance; their want of trust in His power and wisdom who, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, had brought them forth out of their house of bondage; and perhaps we may at times feel as if their murmurings against the Lord and against Moses were something so extraordinary and unreasonable, that we could never have been guilty of the like, under the same circumstances. But how much must all that they had to endure of mere physical privations have been enhanced, and made more overwhelming, by the almost irresistible despondency which oppresses the mind, amid this fearful silence and solitude! It is impossible to look around on the ghastly and almost unearthly desolation of this "great and terrible wilderness," without feeling that their trials were far greater than we had ever before imagined; without feeling sympathy with their sufferings, as pity for their frailty.

After a painful day's march, we encamped at the entrance to Wady Homr, where we were fortunate enough to find some rain-water among the rocks, a little better than what we had in the skins.

15th February.

The valleys continued to partake of the same character as those which we passed through yesterday, but were more open, and less gloomy. In many places the sand had been drifted very much, and lay like immense snow-wreaths against the mountain-side.

In the evening, we pitched our tents in Wady Ramleh, a wide sandy valley, having before us the rugged mountain called Gebel Gerabee, on the summit of which are the ruins of Serabat el Chadem, which we were to visit next morning.

16th February.

Having sent on the camels, we set out with Besharah (one of the Beni Sayds) and a servant, to visit the ruins.

After descending a steep bank of sand, and crossing a narrow valley full of masses of rock and mountain wrack, with a few leafless prickly bushes, we began to ascend the mountain. The path was rugged and precipitous, and we had to use our hands as well as feet in climbing from rock to rock, till we came to the verge of an immense chasm, surrounded by perpendicular rocks of great height, and fearful to look into. Passing along a narrow ledge on the margin of this abyss, and again climbing

with hands and feet, creeping sometimes over and sometimes round the huge masses of rock which have fallen from the mountain above, we at last reached the summit. The view over the Desert is gloomy and desolate: a sea of barren rocky mountains, and wild serrated peaks, surging upwards from the sandy valleys that wind among them—"a land of deserts and of pits, a land of drought and of the shadow of death, a land where no man passed through, and where no man dwelt."

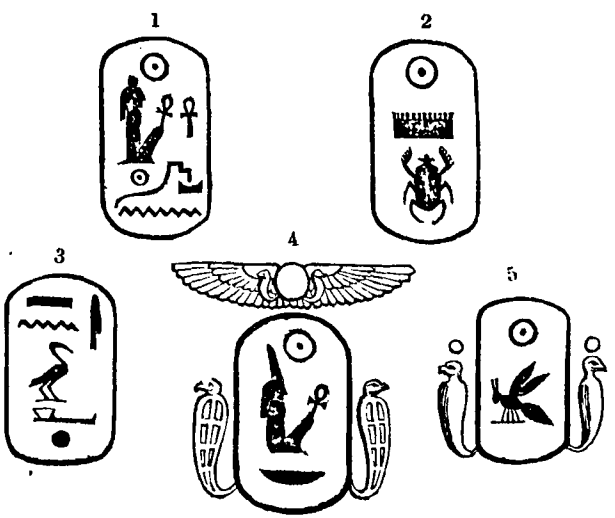
The ruins appear from a little distance a group of upright stones amidst a confused mass of fallen masonry, and bear a considerable resemblance to an old church-yard. The upright tablets are from six to eight feet in height, and about two feet broad, and are arched at the top. They are covered on both sides with hieroglyphics; but on the side exposed to the northern blasts, the inscriptions are nearly obliterated. Many of these tablets are thrown down, and mingled with fragments of square pillars and the ruins of some kind of building. Among them we found two capitals, bearing the head of Isis, sculptured on four sides, with ox ears, and the hair falling in a long curl on each side of the face.

These ruins were discovered by Niebuhr in 1761; but the account which he gives of them is very meagre, and he appears to have been prevented,

by fear of the Arabs, from examining them minutely. They were afterwards visited by Burckhardt, and Henniker, and later travellers, and more recently by Laborde, who appears to have examined them more attentively. He supposes them to be the remains of a cemetery, in which the Egyptian workmen employed in copper-mines, which were worked at a very early period in these mountains, were buried. This, however, is merely a conjecture; and it is not very likely that so much labour would have been bestowed in covering the tombs of common workmen, perhaps slaves, with such elaborate hieroglyphic inscriptions.

On carefully examining the whole ruins, we succeeded in tracing the plan and dimensions of the building, which has evidently been a temple. The pronaos is about a hundred feet in length, the cella about seventy-five by thirty-three in breadth. The inscribed tablets appear to have stood in two rows within the temple. The end opposite the entrance, and part of one corner of the building, remain five or six feet above the ground. The wall is constructed with large square blocks, and is covered with hieroglyphics on the inside. There is an excavated chamber, the entrance to which is nearly closed up with sand and rubbish, which was probably the adytum. It is supported by a single square pillar in the centre, and both the walls and

the pillar are covered with hieroglyphics. There are several cartouches on the upright tables, which may perhaps determine the time at which the temple was built. It must have been at a very remote period, if I am right in supposing two of these cartouches to be identical with those on the obelisks at Luxor and Heliopolis. This is a subject, however, on which I am profoundly ignorant and the difference which, to my inexperienced eyes, is not great, may, after all, be very important: but the following cuts are engraved from drawings of them, for the benefit of any of your



No. 3 is on the square pillar supporting the adytum, the rest are on the upright tablets.

friends who may be learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians.

We found one of the Arabs with our dromedaries at the place where we had encamped the previous evening, and set out in search of the caravan and our tents. We rode through a narrow defile, terminating in a steep mound of stones and mountain wrack, where we were obliged to dismount and ascend on foot, driving the dromedaries before us. In the next wady we were surprised to find little Furrook, an Abyssinian boy in Mr. Pell's service, seated on a rock, and one of the Bedaweens at a little distance, watching the dying moments of his dromedary. On seeing our beasts, it made an effort to rise, but sank down again quite exhausted. A large white vulture was soaring over the spot, and was only deterred by the presence of man from attacking the dying animal. The Bedawee, however, would not leave it; and, having mounted Furrook behind our friend Ismael, we left him to his melancholy watch.

The country became more gloomy as we proceeded. The mountains had a scorched, metallic appearance, and the valleys were so encumbered with masses of rock and sharp stones, that our progress was slow and painful.

At sunset we entered Wady el Loab, a fine open valley, surrounded by mountains of red

granite, and full of bushes of broom covered with white blossom. It was nearly dark when we perceived a fire at the upper end of the valley; and, dismounting from my dromedary, I walked on and found our tents pitched, and dinner—such as it was—in preparation.

17th February.

The Bedawee who remained with Furrook's dromedary arrived at the tents during the night. As we had expected, the animal died.

It was a beautiful morning when we started; and, after a ride of two hours, we halted in a fine open valley, like that which we had left, with a magnificent view of part of the Sinaite group before us. The appearance of our party created considerable alarm in a group of black tents which were pitched in the middle of the valley, and near which some flocks of goats and one or two donkeys were feeding. As soon as we appeared, the tents went down one after another, the donkeys were caught and loaded, and the whole party were scampering off as fast as they could. But the goats were not so easily collected, nor so quickly driven off, and we were soon in the midst of the fugitives. They were a party of women and children of the Owlad Sayd, who were tending their flocks; and the presence of our Bedaween companions at once restored tranquillity and

confidence. We distributed a few piastres among the boys, principally because they were the first Arabs we had met with who did not ask it.

Here we determined to rest till the afternoon, as the day promised to be a scorching one; but Hussein, who was impatient to get to his tents, went on with the caravan, leaving Besharah to guide us to the encampment. Our rest, however, was anything but a comfortable one for me. I had lost a great portion of the skin of my face, and suffered severely from the eruption called *prickly heat;* about noon the sun became intensely powerful, and I walked restlessly about in search of some shady corner to screen me from its rays. About three o'clock we mounted again, and at five arrived at the encampment of the Owlad Sayd.

Our painted pavilions looked a little out of place beside the black Arab tents, which were more in character with the dark shaggy mountains which formed the back-ground of the picture, and the wild figures who were moving about. The whole scene was quite patriarchal in its character, and carried the mind back to the times when men were hunters and shepherds in the field, and dwellers in tents. A kid had been killed for us, and our servants were busy cooking at a fire in the open air: before one of the tents two women, seated on the ground, were grinding

at a small hand-mill, one turning the stone while the other poured in the corn: at another, a girl baking the Arab bread for us,

> Tost the thin cake on spreading palm:
> Or fix'd it on the glowing oven's side
> With bare wet arm, and safe dexterity.

The camels, relieved from their burthens, were cropping the scanty herbage around the tents; troops of boys and girls were driving home the goats from their pasture in the neighbouring valleys; and, although some of the highest peaks were still lighted by the setting sun, the moon was beginning to shed a sweet silvery light over the valley.

Old Hussein received us in his tent in his usual kind, courteous manner. His tent, which was formed of black cloth made, I believe, from goats' hair, appeared to differ very little from the others around it. It was divided into two parts by a sort of curtain. One division formed the women's apartment; and the other, in which he received us, contained no furniture except one or two old carpets on which we sat.

After taking coffee and smoking a pipe with him, the sheich came with us to Mr. Pell's tent, where we dined together; while the rest of our Arab friends made themselves merry round the fire outside.

Next morning (18th), we started again on our way to Mount Sinai, and about one o'clock entered the wild rocky pass leading to the great valley of El Raha.

It is a continued ascent until you reach the open valley, and there has been a regular path along the side of the mountain, formed of large blocks of granite, but now much destroyed by the winter torrents. A small stream runs in the bottom of the defile, frequently interrupted, and diverted from its course, by huge masses of granite which have fallen from the mountains on either side. The path winds among similar masses of rock, some of them of such enormous size, that one wonders how they could have been arrested in their headlong descent before reaching the bottom of the ravine. On some of the most conspicuous of these rocks smaller stones are placed, sometimes one stone above another, which it is the custom of pilgrims to set up as they pass. This is intended to express, and is generally accompanied by some verbal expression of, thanksgiving for their safe arrival at the end of their journey; and is evidently a remnant of the very ancient custom, of which many instances are recorded in the Old Testament. To remove any of these stones is considered very improper, and sure to bring some misfortune on the person who does so.

About half-way up the pass, Mr. Roberts and I dismounted, for the ascent was toilsome, and, from the rocky and broken state of the road, painful to the dromedaries.

We were soon far ahead of the rest of the party, and finding, when we had passed the defile, a wide valley stretching out before us; and others, more wild and picturesque, branching out on each side, we were rather at a loss what direction to take. After some deliberation we, as usual in such cases, took the wrong, and were just turning a shoulder of the hill which would have put us out of sight of our companions, when I fortunately looked round, and saw our party moving slowly along the opposite side of the Wady el Raha. We made all haste to overtake the caravan, happy at having so narrowly escaped being left to spend the night among the rocks and caves.

The sun had set before we reached the middle of the valley; and I have seldom seen anything grander than the appearance of these bare granite mountains, with their ragged peaks glittering in the moonlight. As we entered the narrow valley in which the convent stands, lights were seen moving about the building; and when we rode up to the walls, a grey-bearded figure appeared, with a torch, at a small window high above our heads; and, after reconnoitring us for a few moments,

withdrew without speaking a word. Presently another window opened, several monks appeared with lights, and a rope was let down for our letters. After a minute or two, during which our friends above appeared to be in deep consultation, the rope was again let down for ourselves.

The ascent is somewhat nervous, I assure you; for the whole apparatus consists of a rope with a loop at the end of it—rather ominous—very like being "kilted up in a tow," as Bailie Jarvie has it—your whole safety depends on your holding the rope firmly with your hands, and you find constant employment for your feet, in keeping yourself from coming in collision with the rough projections of the wall. Then the old monks walk so slowly round their windlass above, that you think you are to be left all night dangling in the air; and, when you are fairly wound up, you find yourself hanging two or three feet from the window, without the possibility of getting in, till the monks get hold of the rope and land you like a bale of goods. It put me in mind of Sir Arthur Wardour's ascent from Bessy's Apron—"That's right! haud weel aff the Cat's Lug! tak' a gude grip o' Crummie's Horn"—for many were the jesting advices and loud the peals of laughter, during my ascent, from my friends who remained below to enjoy the scene.

We were very kindly received by the monks, and had two apartments allotted to us, furnished with deewans, and carpets. The superior had retired to rest; but, after we had got all our luggage hoisted up, and were seated in our room, he paid us a visit. He was a fine venerable old man, and very polite; but unluckily he could speak very little Arabic, and no other language except Romaic. With Mr. Pell's Greek and the superior's small Arabic, we contrived to get on very good terms with our host. He apologised for offering us a meagre supper, the rules of the convent not permitting the use of meat, but promised that a more substantial meal should be provided for us next day. The rules of the convent, however, did not prevent his pledging us in a glass of excellent arack, from a curious old flask of gilded crystal. A smoking pilaf was then set before us, and the finest dates I have ever seen; but the greatest luxury to us was the clear, cool, sparkling water from the convent well.

February 19.

The convent is an irregular quadrangle, situated on the slope of one side of the valley. Part of the walls rests on the base of the western mountain, while the rocks on the opposite side of the ravine are scarcely twenty paces from the front of the

convent. There are only two entrances; a subterranean passage communicating with the garden, and rarely used, and the window, by which we were admitted, which is thirty-two feet from the ground. The subterranean passage is secured by a strong iron-studded door at each end. The walls are high and well built of square blocks of granite, and flanked by towers at the angles. The interior is divided into several courts, round each of which there is a wooden balcony, from which the upper rooms enter; the lower apartments being used, I believe, for store-houses and other similar purposes.

The great church was founded by the emperor Justinian. It is supported by a double row of granite pillars, with rude Corinthian capitals; and the pillars, as well as the interior walls, are covered with a coating of thin white plaster. The altar is separated from the body of the church by a high skreen, richly carved and gilded, and surmounted by a large gilded cross reaching nearly to the roof; and there are abundance of bad pictures; grim-looking saints, and tawdry simpering madonnas, in the flat hard style common in the Greek churches. Thirty-four silver lamps, of various sizes, hang from the roof, some of them of exquisite workmanship; and on the altar there is a goodly display of pixes, chalices, and crosses, set

with precious stones. They show the silver lid of a sarcophagus representing a full-length figure of the empress Anne of Russia, who, it seems, intended to be buried here; and another *said to contain* the bones of St. Catharine, which were found in the neighbouring mountain, whither, according to the monkish legend, her body was conveyed by angels. The dome over the altar contains a large mosaic of the crucifixion, and portraits of the emperor Justinian and his empress Theodora.

The most sacred spot is the chapel of the Burning Bush. We descended a few steps from the interior of the church to a low door, where we were required to take off our shoes before entering this sanctum sanctorum of the monks, who displayed a great deal more fuss and ceremony about admitting us, than reverence after we were in. It is a small circular chapel under a dome, lighted by two or three lamps, and containing nothing worthy of note, except two very beautiful illuminated MSS. of the Gospels, which were lying on the altar.

The exterior of the church is without any architectural beauty; but one little circumstance struck me as very interesting. This was, several shields and coats of arms rudely engraved on the stone, on each side of the entrance; memorials, no doubt,

of the chivalry of the crusades, and perhaps scratched with their daggers by some knightly pilgrims.

On the walls there is a small chapel dedicated to St. George, gaudily adorned, and containing several flat, staring pictures of saints, with gilded glories round their heads. The saint himself prances gallantly on a white charger, with his eyes staring straight forward instead of at the dragon under his feet; and he handles his spear in a most awkward and unknightly manner.

There is another chapel dedicated to St. Catharine, and a small mosque, built about three hundred years ago, when the convent was threatened by one of the Mooslim rulers of Egypt; a compromise with the infidel which, the monks say, saved their convent.

The library contains a small number of printed books, and Greek and Arabic MSS.; but none, I believe, of any great antiquity. They appear to be in sad confusion, and the good superior seemed to be very innocent of any knowledge of their contents. He put into my hands, with an air of great importance, a very thin octavo, which he appeared to attach considerable value to. It was an Annual Report of the London Bible Society!

No Arab is ever admitted within the walls; not

even our friend Hussein, who is guardian of the convent; but he is supplied with a certain portion of bread and fire-wood while he remains.

The discipline of the convent is very severe. The monks are obliged to attend mass twice every day and twice during the night. They are forbidden to eat animal food, even fish; and are worse off than the friars of Fail, who

> Made their eggs saft wi' butter,
> And their kail thick wi' bread;

for they are allowed neither eggs, butter, nor oil. Their food appears to be rice, bread, and dates; yet they were all fine athletic-looking men; and even the old superior, who had been forty years in the convent, and was past his eightieth year, appeared to enjoy excellent health.

It may be, that they thrive on their vigils and meagre diet, as the holy clerk of Copmanhurst did on his dried peas and a draft from St. Dunstan's well. They have some cunning hunters among them, that is certain; for an antelope and two wild goats (Ibex) were brought to the convent one morning for our use, and very scientifically shot they were too: moreover the Ibex proved most excellent mutton.

They have several bells in the convent, which appear to be seldom used; the monks being sum-

moned to their duties by striking with a hammer on a long piece of stone, suspended by a cord from the middle, which sends forth a most doleful sound.

The monks appear to be on tolerably friendly terms with the Arabs around the convent, to whom a scanty dole of bread is let down, from the window at which we entered, three times a week. The Arabs, who appear to be very poor, collect under the convent wall at the appointed hour; and, the rope being let down, they fasten to it their bags for the reception of the alms of the monks, who draw up the whole, and, putting a portion of bread into each, toss them down, one by one, to the hungry expectants below.

These Arabs inhabit caves in the neighbouring mountains, and belong to none of the regular tribes, calling themselves simply Djebalyeh — "mountaineers." They are said to be descended from a few slaves, originally from the shores of the Black Sea, who were sent by Justinian as menial servants to the priests*. As they increased in number they were settled by the convent as guardians of the orchards and date-groves throughout the peninsula; but when, at a subsequent period, the Bedawéens deprived the convent of many of its possessions, these slaves became Mooslims and

* Burckhardt.

adopted the Bedaween habit. They acknowledge their descent from the Christian slaves, and some of them are still employed in the convent garden and in collecting fire-wood.

Gebel Mousa and Gebel Catharine are said to be the Mount Sinai and Mount Horeb of Scripture. There appears to me to be very strong evidence against this, as well as the identity of other localities, pointed out by the monks as places famous in Scripture history.

Rising from the most elevated part of the Sinaite group, Gebel Mousa and Gebel Catharine may rather be considered as two peaks of the same mountain, than as two distinct and separate mountains; and there appears no good reason for identifying the latter, rather than any other mountain in the district, with Mount Horeb, unless it be its proximity to the supposed Sinai, and the circumstance of their being sometimes mentioned together in the Bible as if they were so contiguous, that what took place at the one might with equal propriety be said to have occurred at the other.

We find, however, that wherever Horeb is mentioned, the transaction referred to at the time is said to have taken place *in*, and never *upon*, Horeb. "Behold, I will stand before thee upon the rock *in* Horeb." Exod. xvii. 9. "They

made a calf *in* Horeb, and worshipped the molten image"—while the events which occurred at Sinai are recorded as having taken place *upon* the mount; or the phraseology is such as to indicate that Sinai was one individual mountain of the group. "They pitched their tent in the wilderness, and there they encamped *before* the mount."—"The third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people *upon* Mount Sinai.—Take heed unto yourselves that ye go not *up into* the mount.—And Moses went *down* from the mount.—And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai *on the top* of the mount; and the Lord called Moses *up to the top* of the mount—and Moses *went up**." All indicating that Mount Sinai was an individual mountain; while the manner in which Horeb is mentioned, would lead one to regard it rather as a general appellation for the whole district. We find Horeb, too, mentioned in connexion with an event which occurred before the arrival of the children of Israel at what is termed, in the following chapter, "the wilderness of Sinai." When the people did chide with Moses at Rephidim, saying, "Give us water that we may drink," the Lord commanded Moses to take his rod in his hand and go,—"And behold I will stand before thee on the rock *which is in Horeb;* and thou shalt

* Exod. xix. 2, 11, 12, 14, 20.

smite the rock." And in a subsequent passage we read that the children of Israel "were *departed from* Rephidim, and were *come to* the desert of Sinai." I would conclude from this that Horeb was a term for the whole wilderness, including the lower group called Gebel Serbal as well as the upper group of Mount Sinai.

But however this may be, I have no hesitation in saying that Gebel Mousa is not the Mount Sinai of Scripture; and was probably never considered so before the foundation of the convent; and I shall presently show that the rock pointed out by the monks, as "the rock in Horeb," from which the miraculous supply of water was obtained, is not in the Rephidim of Scripture.

A regular path, with steps at the more difficult parts of the ascent, has been constructed from the convent to the summit of Gebel Mousa. In one or two parts it still offers some assistance to the pilgrims who ascend to visit the chapel on the top, but in most places it is broken up and destroyed by the winter torrents, and the ascent is difficult and fatiguing. About two-thirds of the way up, you come to a small valley lying in a hollow of the mountain, and surrounded by high rocks. A single cypress-tree grows beside a stone tank in the middle of the hollow, and there is a rude chapel built over the cave to which Elijah is supposed to

have retired, when he fled from the wrath of Jezebel. This is the first place at which the pilgrims stop, and perform certain prayers in the chapel, and in the cave under it.

From this point to the summit, the ascent is very steep and difficult. On the highest peak stands the chapel, which is the principal object of pilgrimage; and, a little below, there is a small mosque, which is visited by Mooslim pilgrims. Both are constructed in the rudest manner, and are open to all the blasts of heaven. The wind blew keenly here, and patches of snow were still lying in every sheltered nook among the rocks.

The view is savage and desolate beyond description: a wilderness of naked, ragged peaks, and deep rocky ravines: it is very grand, and amply repays the labour of the ascent; but it is not the view I expected to see from the summit of Mount Sinai. I looked in vain for any open valley or plain, on which the children of Israel might have encamped in sight of the mount; and it is evident from the sacred narrative that the mount was seen by the whole host, and they from the mount; nay, that the encampment advanced so near to "the border of it," that it was necessary to set bounds, lest the people or their cattle should touch it. I consider this as quite conclusive against Gebel Mousa, in the absence of any evidence in its

favour, or any tradition older than the convent of St. Catharine.

There appears to have been an earlier tradition in favour of Gebel Serbal, which forms a separate group, seven or eight miles further to the west, and must unquestionably have been the first high mountain which the Israelites came to on their journey out of Egypt. In the wide valleys around its base, there is ample room for the children of Israel to have encamped in sight of its summit; there are vestiges of a path, and steps leading to the top; and, from the remains of a chapel on the highest point, and traces of inscriptions on the rocks, there can be little doubt that it has been the Mount Sinai of pilgrimage before the foundation of the present convent.

The advantage of its natural position, and this apparently earlier tradition in its favour, have led some writers to conclude that Gebel Serbal is the true Mount Sinai. But although its claims to be Mount Sinai are, in some respects, better founded than those of Gebel Mousa, they are liable to an objection which I think quite insuperable.

"The children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran *." Sinai and Paran, then, were different places, and at a certain dis-

* Numbers, x. 12.

tance from each other; and, if it can be shown that Gebel Serbal is Mount Paran, it follows, of course, that it cannot be Mount Sinai.

Now, the valley at the foot of Gebel Serbal is called Wady Feiran, or Faran—that is Paran, for the Arabic letter represents both sounds *p* and *f*; and Burckhardt states, on the authority of the Arabian historian Makrizi, that a city in the valley, the mountain itself, and the whole country between it and the sea, were called by the same name. Gebel Serbal, therefore, appears to be Mount Paran, and, consequently, cannot be Mount Sinai.

Lord Lindsay, with apparently better reason, has fixed on Gebel Minnegia as the true Mount Sinai. It rises at one end of the great valley called El Raha, where, I agree with Lord Lindsay in thinking, that the encampment of the Israelites must have been. The valley rises from the base of Gebel Minnegia, by a very gentle acclivity, presenting a plain of considerable extent, varied only by a few slight undulations; and is, in fact, the only situation in the district in which the children of Israel could have encamped.

I am inclined, therefore, to agree with Lord Lindsay that Gebel Minnegia is Mount Sinai; but at the same time it must be confessed that, except its somewhat more imposing appearance, there is

no good reason for preferring it to any of the other mountains which inclose the plain. I feel no doubt that the host of Israel encamped in El Raha when the law was given from Mount Sinai; but the exact position of that mountain will perhaps ever remain in obscurity.

The deep rocky valley called El Ledja, formed by Gebel Mousa and Gebel Catharine, is the locality which the monks of St. Catharine identify with the Rephidim of chap. xvii. of Exodus. It is an elevated, rocky valley, and must, in all probability, have been too well supplied with springs of water to have rendered necessary the miracle related in the text. The circumstance of its being in the district properly called "the wilderness of Sinai," is quite fatal to their tradition; for we read that "in the third month after the children of Israel had gone forth out of the land of Egypt, in the same day they came into the wilderness of Sinai; *for they were departed from Rephidim and were come into the desert of Sinai.*"

After the people had been miraculously supplied with water at Rephidim, when Moses, according to the Divine command, struck the rock in the sight of the elders of Israel, we find that Amalek came out and fought with Israel in Rephidim. Now, in Wady Feiran and the neighbouring valleys, ruins are found which indicate that the

country was once possessed by a settled people; and these ruins have been supposed to be the remains of towns of the Amalekites *. Further west is a barren sandy desert, and there are no wells nearer than Morcka on the sea-coast; it is a land of drought where there is no water, and where such a miraculous interposition as that recorded in the text could alone have supplied the people with water to drink. On their still advancing from this barren district, "Amalek came out and fought with Israel;" no doubt to oppose the entrance of the Israelites into their fertile and well-watered valleys; and after "Joshua had discomfited Amalek with the edge of the sword," the host of Israel "departed from Rephidim;" and came into the wilderness of Sinai.

Comparing the situation of all these places with the sacred narrative, there can be little doubt that Rephidim was to the west of Gebel Serbal, that that mountain is Mount Paran, and that one of the mountains overlooking the plain of El Raha is Mount Sinai.

On the 22nd February we took leave of the convent. Nothing could exceed the kindness and hospitality of the superior, and all the brotherhood, during our stay; and they now furnished us

* Burckhardt.

with a supply of bread, dates, and rice, for our journey.

About noon we started, and crossing the plain of El Raha, which I have mentioned so often, entered Wady Sheich. As we passed the sheich's tomb, from which the valley takes its name, one of the Bedaweens brought a handful of sand from the interior of the building, and sprinkling it on the heads of our dromedaries, assured us that it would preserve us from any ill fortune by the way.

Towards evening we left the granite mountains, and passed through several dreary sandy valleys, walled in by high sandstone rocks, curiously turreted and perforated, and worn in long parallel grooves, which gave them a strange architectural appearance at a distance. Burckhardt conjectures this district to be the Hazeroth of Moses.

Our route during the two next days continued among narrow rocky wadies of a less desolate appearance. Dwarf shrubs clothed the rocky sides of many of the valleys, the cry of the partridge was heard on every side, and we saw a good many of these birds, but they were too wary to remain within shot.

On the morning of the 25th we entered a mountain pass leading, by very gradual declivity, to the shores of the eastern gulf of the Red Sea. There was a cool breeze blowing around us; we felt

refreshed by the very sight of the deep blue water in the distance; and, although a thin, light mist appeared above the sea, drifting rapidly before the wind, we anticipated a delightful ride along the shore. We had stopped to sketch a very romantic group of rocks at the head of the pass, and sent on the camels, keeping only Besharah to guide us to our tents in the evening, and little Furrook, who carried our breakfast. The wind became gradually stronger as we descended and passed one or two openings in the mountains; and, when we arrived at the bottom of the pass, and left the shelter of the high rocks, we found ourselves exposed to such a breeze, that it was with some difficulty that we accomplished our intended breakfast. But, to our more serious discomfort, we now found that what we had mistaken for vapour rising from the sea, was fine sand, which now covered in one dense cloud the whole plain between the mountains and the sea. Our caravan had passed more than two hours before, and we had no alternative but to follow, wrapping our heads in shawls and handkerchiefs, and trusting to Besharah to guide us through the storm. We kept as near each other as possible, Besharah leading the way; for the clouds of sand were so dense, that we could scarcely see ten yards around us; and had proceeded very slowly for about an hour, when a dim shadowy

figure on a dromedary appeared, moving at a wavering and uncertain pace through the sand drift. It was Saad, the sheich's Nubian slave, who had been sent with two skins in search of water in the morning, and was now making his way to the tents. He had found no water, however. Our proper course lay along the coast, in which direction we supposed we had all along been moving; but in a little while we got among large pools of salt water, and at last found ourselves riding directly into the sea. We had now something to guide us; and, keeping straight along the shore, we reached our tents late in the afternoon. They were pitched beside a well, near a group of wild palm-trees; but the water was very bad, and the ground salty and damp, and too much exposed in case of another sand-drift. We therefore ordered the tents to be struck, and the camels loaded again; and, riding on till sunset, encamped on a gravelly plain between the mountains and the sea.

This was certainly the most uncomfortable evening we had had. Our eyes, noses, and ears, were filled with sand. I felt it grinding in my teeth the whole evening; it had got into one of my portmanteaus in considerable quantity, and, what was worse, had found its way among our provisions. The water, too, was worse than ever; stinking and full of animalcules; and I could scarcely

swallow it after being strained through two or three pocket-handkerchiefs.

Next morning (26th) we sent forward the camels early, and had a delightful ride along the sands. The morning was most beautiful, numbers of small crabs were running about in every direction, and the sea appeared absolutely alive with shoals of fish. I felt very thirsty, and could almost fancy that the feeling was aggravated by the sight of the sea, so beautifully fresh and clear. It reminded me of the lines in the Ancient Mariner—

> Water, water, everywhere,
> And not a drop to drink.

We had a swim, however, and felt much refreshed by it. During the heat of the day, we rode slowly on, stopping now and then to pick up a few shells. At Ras Abasoar we struck again into the mountains; and, crossing the rocky and precipitous path over the promontory, came again upon the sea-shore at sunset. We had some difficulty in finding our tents, as we had lost the track of the camels' feet among the stones and hard gravel, and it was nearly dark when we arrived at the camp.

We were met by Sheich Hussein, who told us, with some anxiety in his face, that two of our servants were missing. In spite of his remon-

strances, they had persisted in following a path of their own choosing, instead of keeping with him and the rest of the party. This was the second occasion on which one of them had lost his way by not keeping by the party, and we felt a little uneasy about them; for although we were not much afraid of their being attacked by the hyenas, which Besharah seemed to think highly probable, we were not free from some apprehension of their losing themselves altogether, or breaking their necks among the rocks. A large fire was lighted, and guns fired every five or ten minutes; and about nine o'clock the delinquents appeared.

Besharah had been the constant guide and companion of our rides, when away from Sheich Hussein and our caravan. He was an intelligent, obliging, good-humoured fellow; and, we thought, had become really attached to us. We certainly all of us felt a great regard for him, and were both disappointed and surprised, on starting this morning, (27th,) to find one of the other Bedaweens in his place. No one knew what had become of him, although it was supposed that he had started for Akaba early in the morning, to give notice of our approach.

About ten o'clock we passed the island of Graia, called by the Arabs *Kalat el Dier*. I believe that Laborde is the only European who has landed on

this island since the time of the crusades. We had no means of crossing to it; and there is nothing in his description sufficiently interesting to have induced us to lose our time in constructing a raft for the purpose, as he did. This island served as a defence to the port of Elath against the surrounding tribes, from the earliest period; and appears to be covered, to a considerable extent, with the ruins of the ancient fortifications.

About one o'clock we found our friend Besharah seated on a rock by the sea-side, and his absence was now accounted for. He knew how ill off we had been for water during the last two days, and had started very early, and walked all the way to Akaba, that he might fill one of our *zumzumichs** at the well in the fortress, and meet us with the first draft of fresh water we had had for some days. We could not but feel this disinterested kindness and attention to our wants, on the part of our Bedaween friend; kindness which can hardly be appreciated by those who have not travelled in this barren and thirsty wilderness; nor did he appear to be less gratified, by the grateful eagerness with which we received his gift.

About three o'clock we reached Akaba and marched our party up to the high level ground overlooking the fortress, which appeared the most

* A leathern bottle which each man carries at his saddle.

eligible situation for our encampment. We had just dismounted, but had not begun to unload the camels, when two officers bustled up, followed by half-a-dozen irregular Arab soldiers, and demanded by what authority we pitched our tents there. We had the Pacha's firman, we said, and we intended to pitch our tents on whatever spot might appear most convenient to ourselves. This produced a loud remonstrance from our two new acquaintances, who informed us that it was the governor's will that we should come into the fortress. Both spoke at the same time, and very loud, and were beginning to order the Arabs to take their camels down to the fort, when Mr. Pell turned to the most loquacious, and, putting his hand on his mouth, told him to hold his tongue. "We don't know who you are," he said; "when we have got our tents pitched we shall come to the governor—if he has anything to say before that, he must come to us." "Wullah!" exclaimed the astonished aga, turning to his companion, "they don't know who we are!"

A second messenger now arrived, who said that the place we had chosen was dangerous, that we would certainly be robbed; and that, as the governor was responsible for our safety, he desired that our camels, tents, luggage, everything might be brought within the walls of the fortress. But

we recollected how Lord Lindsay and his friends had been treated here, and had no idea of walking of our own accord into the governor's trap. We told his messengers that we were quite able to protect ourselves, and that we thought the outside as safe as the inside of the fortress; that, however, we would so far comply with his wishes as to pitch our tents in the grove of date-trees between the fort and the sea, which, as it was directly under the walls, would give the governor an opportunity of watching over our safety. And, without waiting to hear more, we walked down to the place where we meant to encamp.

While we were busy arranging our tents, the little great man came down. He was a swarthy, thin-bearded, greasy, vulgar-looking little fellow, and had evidently dressed for the occasion, and wanted to make an impression. He wore a dark-coloured Moorish *bournouse* over his frayed and faded silk ckooftan, and was smoking from the tube of a large *sheesheh**, nearly as tall as himself, which an attendant carried behind him. His ineffectual attempts to dispose his shabby dress to the best advantage, and to assume something like an air of dignity, were exceedingly amusing. He looked as if he would fain have bullied a little;

* The Persian water-pipe.

but we knew our man, and went on with our work without appearing to observe him. At last the topgi bashi, the second in command of the fortress, stepped forward to inform us that this was the governor. We replied that we were busy—that in an hour we would come to the fortress—and that, in the mean time, we wished to be relieved from the crowd of idle Arabs, who were lounging about, prying into everything, and no doubt ready to pick up any unconsidered trifle they might lay their hands on. This was done immediately. The *topgi* at once dropped his dignity, and shying his staff among the legs of the idlers, began to pelt them with stones, with such effect that the place was soon cleared. The little nazir too, finding himself in rather a false position, had sneaked off unobserved in the confusion.

As we determined to visit the governor in all the state we could assume, we dressed for the occasion, installed our friend Ismael Effendee in the honourable office of dragoman, and made the servants follow us with our pipes. We found the little man seated on a *mastabbah* in the window of a large dismal-looking apartment, and still smoking his *sheesheh*. The topgi bashi and another officer, and two or three nondescript Arabs, were sitting on a deewan, covered with a dirty mat, at the end of the room. Having seated ourselves

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beside the governor, after the usual salutations, we handed him our firmans, which he read aloud, translating them into Arabic for the benefit of his audience, who were no doubt properly impressed by this display of his learning. We then inquired whether he had received letters from Abbas Pacha for himself and the sheich of the Alloeens; and when the sheich might be expected.

These letters had been promised to us, but had not been sent from the citadel when we left Cairo; and we had started, rather reluctantly, without them, on Dr. Walne, the English consul, promising that they should be forwarded by a courier to Suez. At that place we received a note from Dr. Walne saying, that the letters would be sent before us to Akaba, and now we found that none had arrived.

The governor assured us that the letter to him was quite unnecessary — that our firmans were sufficient to command all the attention and assistance in his power; but it was uncertain where Sheich Hussein the Alloeen might be. A messenger was despatched to bring him to Akaba, but it might be three or four days before he returned; and, in the mean time, we felt anything but pleased at the misarrangement which left us to waste our precious time in this place, in perfect uncertainty when the Alloeens might arrive.

Akaba is a mere group of wretched hovels, and it is difficult to conjecture how the people contrive to live. Where Solomon had his navy of ships, there is not a single boat to be found; and a solitary fisherman may be seen, on a calm day, paddling himself out to sea astride on the trunk of a palm-tree. The fortress is one of the stations at which stores are kept for the Hadg caravan, and is garrisoned by a small number of irregular troops, who appear to have nothing to do but to waste the Pacha's powder in shooting all day at a mark. Some of them are good marksmen, and hit an egg at about eighty yards, which, considering the wretched guns they have, is tolerably good shooting.

The weather was so oppressively hot, that we moved very little out, except in the afternoon to bathe; and we were never allowed, for any length of time, to enjoy the privacy of our own tents without interruption. The nazir was continually dropping in, out of pure idleness and curiosity. He seated himself on our carpet with as little ceremony as if we had known him all our lives; and, as his attendant always followed him with the *sheesheh*, if we were not in a humour for conversation, he seemed quite content to smoke and look at us. His two officers, the topgi bashi and the keeper of the stores, added to their other occupa-

tions that of merchants; and finding there was nothing to be got in the way of official extortion, did all in their power to pick our pockets in their civil capacity. They brought abbayes, keffiehs, shawls, and all manner of Bedaween trappings from the Hedgas for sale, and our tent looked like an old-clothes shop.

Akaba is on the site of Elath, the ancient city of the Edomites, which was taken possession of by David when he conquered Edom. Under David and Solomon, it appears to have been a place of great importance, as commanding the commerce carried on through this branch of the Arabian gulf; and it remained in the hands of the Jews till the reign of Joram, when it was retaken by the Edomites. It was again taken by Azariah; but, during the reign of Ahaz, "Rezin, king of Syria, recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath;" nor did they ever regain possession of it.

It afterwards fell successively into the hands of the Ptolemies, the Romans, the Greek emperors, the Arabians, and the sultans of Egypt. "In former times it was the frontier place of the Greeks; at one mile from it is a triumphal arch of the Cæsars. In the time of Islam it was a fine town, inhabited by the Beni Omeya. Ibn Achmet Ibn Touloun (a sultan of Egypt) made

the road over the Akaba, or steep mountain, before Aila. There were many mosques at Aila, and many Jews lived there; it was taken by the Franks during the crusades, but in 566 * Salaheddun transported ships on camels from Cairo to this place, and recovered it from them. Near Aila was formerly situated a large and handsome town called Aszioun"—Eziongeber †. There are now no remains of either of those towns.

Solomon, we are told, "built a navy of ships at Eziongeber, which is beside Elath, on the shores of the Red Sea, in the land Edom:" and hence we may trace the origin of the appellation "Red Sea" now in use. The land of Edom having extended to Eziongeber, it is probable that the sea was called the sea of Edom; and that the Greeks, mistaking the word Edom (red) for an appellative, translated it ἐρυθρὰ θάλασσα or "the red Sea," by which name it has since been known.

On the 2nd of March the Alloeens arrived. They were by no means so prepossessing in their appearance as our old friends the Beni Sayds. Our usual visiters were with us when they arrived; but, as we did not wish the governor to be present at our conversation, we used very little ceremony in getting rid of him and his friends. After the

* 566 of the Hegira, corresponding to A.D. 1188.

† Makrizi, quoted by Burckhardt.

usual salutations and inquiries after his health, we opened our negotiation with the Alloeen.

The sheich was a thin, wiry man, about fifty, rather under the middle height; his nose thin and aquiline, and his eyes dark, sparkling, and restless. He was dressed in a striped silk ckooftan of Damascus stuff, and an ample robe of scarlet cloth; and wore a red cashmere shawl on his head. He had brought with him his son Mohammed, a fine boy about twelve years of age, of fairer complexion and more open countenance than his father. He wore the Bedaween dress, with his feet bare, and the keffieh disposed in fine picturesque folds round his face, and over his neck and shoulders; and carried one of their long crooked knives in his girdle.

The young sheich watched our negotiation very earnestly, looking alternately from Ismael to his father as either spoke; and if we conversed together in English, his large expressive eyes were fixed on each speaker, as if he were striving to read in our countenances, what he could not understand in our language.

We had brought a letter to Sheich Hussein from M. Linant, the companion of Laborde on his journey to Petra, which Ismael read aloud—reading not being one of the sheich's accomplishments. When he had heard the letter, Hussein placed it

in his bosom, saying that his camels, and everything he had, were ours—that he was ready to conduct us wherever we pleased, and Inshallah! there were few places where we would not be safe under his protection. When we inquired the price of his camels for the journey, he replied that he would fix no price—we were friends of Abd'al Khagg*, and his friends, and he would take no money from us—he knew that we would give him a present at Hebron, which would be adequate to his services.

We knew very well that this was mere talk, and that the old sheich was quietly considering how he could make the best bargain for himself. We were prepared to find him very exorbitant in his demands, and had resolved to have the terms of our bargain distinctly fixed, and an agreement signed before starting.

But, before carrying our negotiation further, we had a proposal to make, which we feared might create some difficulty. Mr. Pell did not intend to accompany us further than to Petra, and wished to take Sheich Hussein, the Beni Sayd, Besharah, and another of our former guides, that he might return with them to Cairo. They had shown some

* The name by which M. Linant is known to the Bedaween tribes, among whom he lived a considerable time, and is much respected.

reluctance to trust themselves among the Alloeens and the Fellahs of Wady Mousa; and when we now made the proposal, explaining Mr. Pell's reason for wishing this addition to our party, little Mohammed looked surprised, and cast a displeased and inquiring glance towards his father, which showed that the proposal was not an agreeable one. The old sheich, however, received it quite unmoved, merely replying that the *khowaga* could return in perfect safety with some of his tribe. On the matter being pressed, he said, he had no objection to the Beni Sayds coming into his country, but that this could not interfere with any agreement we might make with him. In other words, whatever Mr. Pell might pay the others, he was determined to get as much as he could, whether they were of the party or not.

Some words then passed between the two sheichs; little Mohammed began to fidget about in his seat, and was evidently getting excited, as the voices of the old men waxed louder; and the affair ended in the Alloeen declaring that he would not allow the Beni Sayds to come into his country, and in our old friend Hussein suddenly recollecting that he required to be soon in Musr (Cairo), and that he must return to his tents immediately. He then rose and left the tent, and we renewed our negotiation with the Alloeen.

We again pressed Hussein to say what sum he expected for taking us to Hebron, allowing us to spend as many days as we pleased in Wady Mousa. "Ya effendee," said the Sheich, or as he pronounced it, "Uffundee! you must have dromedaries to ride; and you will require twenty-five camels to carry your baggage and tents, then I must take twenty men mounted on dromedaries as a guard." And so reckoning at so much for each camel and dromedary, he made up his demand to 11,250 piastres, about 112*l.*, besides which he expected us to pay 50 piastres a-day for each camel while we remained in Petra.

We expected him to ask at least twice as much as he intended to take, but the exorbitance of this demand we were not prepared for. We expressed great surprise; said that his friend Abd'al Khagg had told us he was a reasonable man; and that we were sorry to find that he had mistaken his character; the sum which he asked was so far beyond what we had any intention of giving, that there was no use in prolonging the conversation. We reminded him that he had taken Lord Lindsay to Petra for less than half what he now demanded, and two friends of Mr. Roberts's for even a smaller sum. "That agreement,"—replied the sheich, very coolly, "was made at Musr, in the house of your consul, you are treating with me in the Desert!"

"Well, then, ya Sheich," said Ismael, "we will return to Musr rather than give what you ask; but the consul and Abbas Pacha shall know how difficult it is to treat with you in your own country —have we not the Pacha's firman?"

"Wullah! ya Uffundee," replied Hussein starting up, "I am not the Basha's servant!

Little Mohammed rose too, and to all appearance the *divan* was broken up; but, just as he was about to leave the tent, Hussein turned and asked, "Well then, Effendee, what *will* you give me?"

The fact was, most of the Beni Sayds had already set out, on their return to their own tents, before Sheich Hussein arrived; and he no doubt thought, that we were completely in his power, and that we could not leave Akaba at all without his assistance. As soon as he had again seated himself, we told him that rather than accede to his demands, we would cross to El Arish and Gaza; and that the Beni Sayds were not so far off but we could easily send after and bring them back. We had come from Musr with twenty camels, we said, and we would have no more now; as to his twenty guards, we did not want them at all. We were quite satisfied that his presence was a sufficient security for our safety.

"By Allah! O Effendee," replied the sheich, "you do not know the country you are going into

—twenty camels are not enough; and as for the guard, they are necessary. Wullah! am I not in danger myself in Wady Mousa? I never go with fewer men, and I will not."

"See, then, O Sheich!" we replied, "you shall take as many camels as you please, and half your tribe for a guard if you think fit; and we will pay you a specific sum for the whole journey. The sum we intended to offer you was 4,000 piastres; but, to put an end to all disputes, we will give 4,500; now, if you choose to take it, well; if not, we are Englishmen, it is our last word."

This offer, although we scarcely expected it, was, after a little more higgling, accepted; the sheich observing, at the same time, that he was sure we would make him a handsome present at *Khalil* (Hebron), and that we would pay for the camels while we remained in Petra. We told him, however, that we promised nothing but what was contained in our written agreement; and that anything beyond that would depend on the manner in which we were treated by him and his men.

The agreement, written in Arabic by Ismael, was then read over to him, and our respective signets affixed to it. We paid him 1,500 piastres down, and were to pay the remaining 3,000 on our arrival at Hebron.

Arrangements were immediately made for start-

ing early next morning; and, in the mean time, to put all in good-humour, we invited the governor, Sheich Hussein, the Alloeen and his son, and Sheich Hussein the Beni Sayd, to dine in our tent at the *mughrib*, or time of prayer, at sunset. During the afternoon the Governor of Adjeroud arrived, to supersede the Governor of Akaba, who is ordered to one of the stations farther into the Desert, and the new governor joined our party.

Our means of entertainment were rather limited. A kid was procured somewhere in the neighbourhood, and excellent fish from the gulf: we had plenty of rice, some onions, and a box or two of *mishmish*, the preserved apricots of Damascus; and our Arab servants displayed considerable ingenuity in the variety and style of their dishes. The dinner was excellent, and our visiters all in very good humour. Little Mohammed's fingers were never out of the dish, except in their way to and from his mouth; and, to use an Arabian simile, or rather a couple of them, his hand went into the dish like the claw of a raven, and came out like the foot of a camel.

They got merry, too, over their meat, as other folks do over their wine; and their good-humour appeared to increase as they filled their stomachs. "Wullah!" exclaimed the Alloeen sheich, as he wiped the soap and water from his beard;

"Wullah! ya Effundee, we have seen many dinners, but never such a one as this—El-ham-dulillah!"

After consuming a fearful quantity of tobacco, with occasional cups of coffee, our guests departed, the governor to his fortress, and the Alloeen to his bivouac among the low bushes at the head of the gulf.

We had now to take leave of the Beni Sayds, and right sorry we were to part with them, for a more honest, simple, kind-hearted set of men I never met with; and there was a savageness of appearance and a want of courtesy about our new allies, which prevented our feeling the same confidence in them. We had bought a few keffiehs and other articles of dress, as presents for two or three of the men who had made themselves especially useful to us; and among them our friend Besharah was, of course, distinguished. He had taken a great fancy for a *gibbeh*, or mantle, of green cloth, which he had seen among the frippery brought to our tents for sale, and was now made happy in the possession of it. They all appeared delighted with our presents, and we parted, I think, with mutual feelings of regret that we were never to meet again. I am sure the feeling was sincere enough on our part.

LETTER IV.

Wady Araba—Gulf of Akaba—Site of Kadesh—Valley of Petra: ruins and excavations of that city—Review of prophecies concerning Edom—The Arabs, their habits, and treatment of travellers—Departure from Petra and incidents of the journey thence to Palestine—Gaza—Askelon—Jaffa—Cesarea—Mount Carmel—Acre—Tyre and Sidon—Arrival at Beyrout.

Beyrout, April 1839.

MY DEAR ——,

UNTIL my arrival here, I have had no opportunity of despatching a letter to you. I now send you the remainder of my journal.

I am glad to find myself once more under a roof, and enjoying the luxury of writing in "my own room." This is a much pleasanter place than I expected, and the situation is very beautiful. The town lies upon a gentle slope, at the extremity of a fine bay, and is surrounded by mulberry and fig gardens, stretching across the plain to the range of Libanus, which forms a grand back-ground to the landscape. But I must return to my journal, and leave any description of this place, of which I have seen very little yet, to my next letter.

We found the Alloeens, after all, a very civil

set of fellows, but their sheich a sad dog. Our route lay up the great Wady Araba, a broad, sandy valley, extending from the southern extremity of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Akaba, and supposed to have been the valley of the Jordan, before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Towards the gulf the valley expands into a plain, about ten miles from east to west, and is probably "the way of the plain from Elath, and from Ezion-gaber," mentioned in Deut. ii. 8. For some distance near the sea, the ground is impregnated with salt, but as we proceeded northward, although still sandy, there was a faint appearance of vegetation. The range of mountains on the west may possibly be the "ascent of Akrabbim," alluded to (in Numbers xxxiv. 4.) in describing the boundaries of the land of Canaan.

We found the valley as we proceeded to be nearly as barren as many parts of the Desert we had travelled through, except that here and there the sand afforded sufficient nourishment to tracts of thin grass; and in some places the valley was pretty well covered with a species of broom, and some thorny shrubs.

About three o'clock in the afternoon Sheich Hussein proposed to stop and pitch the tents; but as we had not made our usual day's journey, and knew that the encampment of the Alloeens could

not be many hours distant, we resolved to continue our march till sunset. In about an hour we reached the Alloeen tents, and could not but think it a little inhospitable in the sheich that he gave us no intimation of their being so near, and offered us no invitation to his tent when we arrived. When we rode up the encampment, two of three of the old men came to meet us. They saluted Hussein, kissing him on each side of the face, and shook hands with us, saying "*Marhabbah*"—"You are welcome;" but, instead of inviting us to his tent, the sheich apologised for not dining with us, as he had many friends to entertain. In fact, his not inviting us to his tent was a piece of rudeness which we could only account for by supposing that we had put him a little out of humour. He had been trying all day to impress us with a very exaggerated idea of the dangers we were to encounter, and, of course, of the value of his protection; all which we had treated with great indifference, telling him that we had no fear of the fellahs of Wady Mousa; that we would not run away from them, as some other travellers had done; and that if he could not defend us, his protection, of which he boasted so much, was of no great value.

Little Mohammed, however, lingered about our tents after his father left us. He had not forgotten the feast at Akaba, and appeared more

inclined to partake of our dinner than to trust to the provision which might have been made in the family tent. We had no difficulty in getting him, at least, to eat of our salt.

Next morning (5th of March) Sheich Hussein appeared as anxious to hurry us away from the encampment, as he had been the day before to prevent our reaching it; but we were resolved to see his tent, whether he would or not, and signified our intention in a way that there was no evading. He led the way rather reluctantly, and the cause of his inhospitality was at once apparent. His own tent, in which he would have been glad to have displayed himself in all his pride and glory, was at some distance in the mountains; and his vanity would fain have prevented our witnessing the poverty of the little temporary abode to which his wife had come to meet him and her son. It was strange to find this instance of vanity in the Desert; and it must have been very powerful, to induce a Bedawee to risk his character for hospitality.

We left the young sheich here, for his mother would not consent to his going into Wady Mousa. But the boy had set his heart on accompanying us, and it was most amusing to see the young Arab, who had been aping the warrior, with an immense knife stuck in his girdle, indulging in a good loud fit of crying at his disappointment.

We had been accosted the evening before by a poor Egyptian, whose "looped and windowed raggedness" betokened extreme poverty, and who appeared to be living among the Alloeens. He begged for a little tobacco, in a very humble tone; and, having received it, we saw no more of him till the morning, when he came to ask that he might be permitted to follow our party, as the only means by which he could with safety return to Egypt. He continued with us during the whole of our journey, and returned to Egypt with Mr. Pell. He never asked for anything, but received with great thankfulness a few old pieces of clothing and the food which was given him; for our servants never sat down to their own meal without handing a portion to the poor Egyptian. When we started in the morning or halted at night, though often weary and foot-sore, he exerted himself in loading and unloading the camels, pitching the tents, and collecting firewood, with an activity and good-will which his countrymen are not much given to, and appeared anxious to repay, by any service in his power, the food and protection he received. All this was so unlike a common beggar, that we became curious to know his history, and how he came to be at the encampment of the Alloeens.

He was, he said, a fellah from Siout, and had come to Cairo with his family for the purpose of

making the pilgrimage to Mecca; and, in December I think, had set out with the great caravan, leaving his wife and children to wait his return. It is the custom for the caravan to halt during the mid-day heat, and to resume their march in the evening; and, on one of these occasions, overcome by the heat and fatigue, he slept so soundly that when he awoke the sun had long set, and the caravan was out of sight. Alone in the midst of the Desert, without food or water, and perfectly ignorant what direction to take, his situation was hopeless enough.

He had followed for a while the track left by the caravan, but either the wind had obliterated the footmarks of the camels, or in his terror and perplexity he had wandered still further from the way, and soon lost the track altogether. In this situation he was found by a party of Bedaweens, who robbed him of all his money and part of his clothes, and left him. After wandering for two days, he alighted on this encampment of the Alloeens, exhausted by hunger and fatigue. They gave him food, and had allowed him to remain ever since at their tents.

We received here another, and, as we thought, an important addition to our party, in the person of Sheich Abed, one of the chiefs of the Fellaheen of Wady Mousa. He was a little grey-bearded

old man, with a high aquiline nose, and small black eyes; and so far from having anything very savage or ferocious in his appearance, he seemed to be a poor stupid body; spoke in a low subdued voice, and appeared to stand very much in awe of our friend Hussein, who, on his part, treated him with very little respect. He had evidently been brought here to meet us, and we concluded that there must be some understanding between him and Hussein about our visit to Petra, and that we had no danger to apprehend from his tribe while we kept him with us. Hussein, however, assured us that we had less to fear from the Fellaheen than from some of the other tribes, who were notorious robbers, and with whom the Alloeens were on evil terms.

The valley, as we proceeded, still displayed the same mixture of barren sand and patches of herbage; and was broken and intersected in many places by deep gravelly hollows, resembling the dry bed of some winter torrent.

About mid-day we passed some ruins, of which we could not determine the character; and in about two hours further, reached a high mass of sandstone rock rising abruptly from the valley, which we had seen at some distance. Steps rudely cut in the rock lead to the summit, where we found a small excavated chamber. It has probably served

as a watch-tower, from which any hostile force advancing by the Wady Araba might be seen.

The range of mountains called Gebel Shera and Gebel Hesma, the Mount Seir of Scripture, bound the valley on the east. The first mention of Mount Seir is in the xiv. chap. of Genesis, when it was inhabited by the Horim, one of the nations whose territory was ravaged by Chedarlaomer and his allies. After the children of Esau had extirpated the original inhabitants, it took the name of the "Land of Edom," which, from at first comprehending the district of Mount Seir only, appears to have extended progressively with the rising power of the Edomites, till it reached to Ezion-gaber, which, in the time of Solomon, we find included in the land of Edom.

Near the high rock which I have described we turned into the valley called El Ghoyer, which divides the range of Mount Seir, and encamped at the foot of the mountains which environ the ancient city of Petra, and in sight of Mount Hor.

The northern part of the Wady Araba is generally believed to be the Desert of Zin, in which the Israelites were encamped at Kadesh, when they applied to the King of Edom for permission to pass through his country; and as this valley of El Ghoyer is the only practicable passage for any large body of men, it was probably the

"King's high way" referred to by Moses in his message. When the King of Edom had refused to grant them a passage through his country, they appear to have fallen back "by the way of the plain before Elath," and, turning the southern extremity of the mountains, to have proceeded northward along the eastern boundary of Mount Seir.

Nothing appears to be known, although much has been conjectured, respecting the situation of Kadesh. It seems to be generally supposed that there were two places of that name, Kadesh Barnea, from whence the spies were sent, and the Kadesh referred to above. The former is placed somewhere in the desert of Paran, on the southern boundary of Palestine, and the latter between the head of the gulf of Akaba and Mount Hor; because the Israelites are said to have "removed from Ezion Gaber, and pitched in the desert of Zin, which is Kadesh," and then to have "removed from Kadesh, and pitched in Mount Hor." But Kadesh is called "a city in the uttermost border" of Edom; and I find it placed in some maps to the north-west of Mount Hor, in about lat. 30° 20′ lon. 35° 20′, where it would be on the borders of the desert of Paran, and the desert of Zin, and might, perhaps, with equal propriety, have been said to be in either. And the supposition that the

Kadesh mentioned in Numbers, xx. 1, was the same with Kadesh Barnea appears to receive some confirmation from the reason assigned for King Arad, the Canaanite, fighting against Israel. He "heard tell that Israel came *by the way of the spies.*"

During the evening Sheich Hussein tried every means to impress us with an alarming idea of the danger of entering Wady Mousa; and proposed that the tents and baggage should be left here, and that we should go with him alone into Petra, that we might more easily make our escape should the Fellaheen come upon us. This, however, we positively refused to agree to. We had already found that there was no confidence to be placed in anything that the sheich said. We were convinced that he had no fear of the Fellaheen himself, and that we were safe enough under his protection; but we suspected that some understanding existed between them, and that his sole object was to hurry us away, that he might get to Hebron and receive his money.

On leaving our tents next morning (March 6th) we were surprised to find the camels straggling about the valley, feeding on the low bushes; and no preparations on foot for starting as usual. Hussein now came up and desired us to point out what things we wished to take into Wady Mousa,

and told us to take nothing that was not absolutely necessary; the tents, baggage, and camels, must remain here till we returned. But we had told him our determination, and we were resolved to stick to it. We answered that we would enter Petra, as we had already said, with our whole party, and pitch our tents there; that we would not leave a man, nor a tent-pin, nor a stick, behind us; that we had his written engagement, and that if he did not perform it to the letter, we should not consider ourselves bound to pay him the 3000 piastres which were due on his arrival at Hebron.

"By Allah! O Effendee!" exclaimed the sheich, turning to Mr. Pell, "you are mad. You are all mad—all you Franks, but I never heard of such madness as this. Do you all want to be killed?"

"What are these Fellahs, that they should kill us, when we are under your protection, O Sheich!"

"Who are they?" burst out the sheich. "What are they? May their fathers be accursed!—but you cannot do this—I will not go—other Franks leave all these arrangements to me, and so must you."

"See, O Sheich," we replied, "we are under your protection, and not under your command—we do not care what other Franks have done. We have told you what we will do; shall we say a thing, and not do it?"

We then called to our servants to get down the tents, and load the camels as usual. Hussein now declared that there was no path by which a loaded camel could pass. "Well," we said, "when we find the road impracticable we shall stop, but not till then."

At eight o'clock we got the whole caravan in motion. Hussein was in a savage bad humour, and kept growling within his beard, or complaining loudly that he had never been so treated before; and every now and then turned round in his saddle to tell us that we were mad—we were all mad—by Allah! we were the last Franks who should ever enter Wady Mousa.

Striking at once into the mountains, we ascended a narrow, romantic glen, full of beautiful oleanders and large bushes of broom, covered with white blossom; a delightful contrast with the desolate scenery we had just left. The cry of the mountain partridge and the cuckoo cheered us as we rode along; numbers of small birds were seen flitting from bush to bush, and our ears were soon greeted with the delightful sound of running water. After passing through this and another similar valley, we came to the more difficult part of the ascent to Petra. Although the path was not an easy one, we had as yet found no great difficulty in getting forward the loaded camels. We had dismounted,

however, and were walking slowly along a narrow path above one of those beautiful glens which I have described, when Hussein pointed to a sort of foot-track across the mountain, which he said was a shorter road than that by which the camels must go; observing, at the same time, with a kind of sneer, that as we had no fear of the Fellaheen we might walk on, and he would join us again in two hours.

We at once agreed to this proposal, and taking a servant to carry our breakfast, and one of the Alloeens as a guide, we began to ascend the path. The scenery as we proceeded became more gloomy, but very grand; not so much from the height of the mountains, which are inferior to many in Europe, but from their wild and highly picturesque forms. Leaving the path we had followed along the verge of one of those deep ravines, filled with luxuriant oleanders and laurel, many hundred feet below, we crossed a ridge of the mountain, and proceeded along the banks of a little brook which winds through the elevated plain at the base of Mount Hor. We had reached the middle of this plain, and were beginning to descend the declivity towards Wady Mousa, when we heard loud shouts behind us; and, looking back, found that we were pursued by a party of Arabs, who called loudly to us to stop. At first we thought they were the

Alloeens, and that some accident had happened to the camels; but, as they approached, there was no mistaking their character. We had fallen into the hands of the Edomites, those Fellaheen, of whose savage disposition we had heard and read so much; and there was nothing for it but to put on as determined a countenance as possible, and endeavour to open a negotiation with them. We had one of the Alloeens with us, and in that we felt some security, as any violence offered to him or us would have been resented by the whole tribe.

Our assailants, of course, far outnumbered us. There were fifteen of them, as savage-looking fellows as one would desire to meet with, all armed with guns, and with the long crooked Arab knife in their girdles. They quickly surrounded our little party; and, all speaking together, and gesticulating with great vehemence, told us to go back, threatening us with death in every shape if we attempted to proceed. But the Arabs are tremendous talkers; and as they did not, on the first onset, offer us any personal violence, we concluded that they had no wish to come to blows, if it could be avoided.

We took advantage of the first lull in the storm of words, to ask why we were stopped in this violent manner. On this, an old Arab, who wore

a Turkish sabre, with about three inches of the point protruding from the end of the scabbard, and announced himself as the sheich, desired us to sit down; and, at the same time, seated himself on the ground. When we had seated ourselves, and the whole party had ranged themselves in a circle round us, the sheich favoured us with a formal oration, which lasted about ten minutes. Having first inquired Ismael's name, he addressed himself to him.

"Ya Hanaffee," he said, "know that there are no evil intentions to you in our minds; but you must turn back. You shall not enter our country. If you persist in going on to Wady Mousa, we tell you plainly it is at the peril of your own lives. We know you come with Sheich Hussein, the Alloeen. He thinks to break laws that are respected by all the tribes, and to go wherever he pleases, because he is a sheich of a great tribe. He has brought Franks into our country, and has got much money from them, which ought to have been given to us. Before we could come upon them, he and the Franks have always made their escape; but now we have got you in our power—Inshallah! we shall have satisfaction for what is past."

This was the substance of the sheich's speech, which was embellished with the usual quantity of

"*Wallahs*," and "*Inshallahs*," and "*Mashallahs*," and delivered with great vehemence, and not a little dignity. The whole party had appeared highly excited, and as the old man every now and then slapped his hand on the sabre that lay across his knees, a murmur ran round his audience in approbation of what he said, and not, we thought, in the kindliest feeling to us.

It was certainly rather a nervous situation to find oneself in; and I am not sure but, at the first onset, some anxious thoughts may have crossed my mind about my own comfortable fireside; but, if so, it was but for a moment, and I soon felt not unpleasantly excited by the adventure. I felt that all depended on our taking the matter very coolly, that they would not dare openly to attack us under the protection of the Alloeens, and that as long as we kept from violence, either offered, or resented by force, there was no danger.

In answer to the sheich, we said that we had come from Akaba with the Alloeens, and meant to pass through Wady Mousa, on our way to Hebron and Jerusalem—that we were strangers, and ignorant of their laws, and could not know where the country of one tribe ended and another began. We acknowledged that his complaint appeared reasonable; and that if money was paid for passing through his country, part of it, at least, should be

paid to him. At the same time we could not pay him and Sheich Hussein too, but if he would wait till the Alloeens came up, we would try to arrange the matter between them. We then rose, and desired Salem to prepare our breakfast.

The sheich refused our invitation to partake of our breakfast, telling us very plainly that he would not eat with us, "because he did not know what might happen when the Alloeens came up;" a kind hint, that if there was to be fighting, he did not wish to be under any conscientious scruples about attacking us. But an Arab can hardly resist coffee, and after some hesitation he was persuaded to drink some of ours. He then turned to Ismael, saying, "Ya Hanaffee! when that old fox comes, we may fight—do not you interfere, and no evil shall befall you. You are under my protection." —"And who," we asked, "is Sheich Abed whom we met at Hussein's tents?" "He is a *majnoon**, he is a child, he is nobody," said the sheich.

We sat for nearly an hour before we saw Hussein and his merry men come "branking o'er the brae." The Fellahs immediately rose to receive him. The parties were nearly equal in point of numbers, if we and our servants kept aloof, and we were quite prepared to witness a skirmish. I cannot say we were disappointed, but we did

* A fool.

certainly feel not a little surprised, when Hussein dismounted from his dromedary, and, walking quietly up to the Fellah sheich, threw his arms over his neck, and kissed him on each side of the face. His presence appeared all at once to calm the excitement of the whole party; their courage had "oozed out at their fingers'-ends," and they stood looking on in a kind of gloomy silence. After saying a few words in a low voice to the Fellah sheich, Hussein turned to us, telling us to mount—that the way was open to us.

Sheich Magabel, the Fellah, mounted on one of the Alloeen's dromedaries, rode beside Hussein; our late enemies appeared suddenly converted into allies, and the whole party moved on together to Petra. We were not altogether satisfied, however, with the new appearance which matters had assumed; and felt a little suspicious of the good understanding which seemed so suddenly to have sprung up between Hussein and Sheich Magabel; and rather doubtful whether the whole affair had not been premeditated. Poor old Sheich Abed was left to draggle on behind with his donkey, nobody paying him the least attention.

Before descending into the valley of Petra, we passed several excavated tombs, and, in a horizontal sheet of rock, several graves of the ordinary size, and three or four feet in depth.

We entered the valley from the south at a point from which a view of nearly the whole of it burst at once on our sight. My expectations were far more than realised. Much as I had heard of the wonderful excavations of Petra, I had formed a very inadequate idea of their state of preservation, of the number of sculptured façades, porticoes, and fanciful designs which surround the valley, or of the extent of the valley itself. It is certainly one of the most wonderful scenes in the world. The eye wanders in amazement from the stupendous rampart of rocks which surrounds the valley to the porticoes and ornamented doorways sculptured on its surface. The dark yawning entrances of the temples and tombs, and the long ranges of excavated chambers, give an air of emptiness and desolation to the scene, which I cannot well describe: it brought to my mind the prophecy, "I will stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness." But in the valley itself, the patches of green corn among the ruins, the stream bordered with oleander and willow, the sweet sound of the running water, and the cry of the cuckoo and the partridge, were all delightful and refreshing after the silence and dreary solitude of the Desert.

We congratulated each other that we were entering Petra under such favourable circum-

stances, in company with the very Fellaheen so much dreaded by former travellers, and with every prospect of being able to explore all the wonders of the place undisturbed. But we soon found that there had been a design either to exclude us from the valley altogether, or to hurry us away before we had time to examine any of the ruins in detail. Had we adopted Hussein's proposal to enter Petra with him alone, we should no doubt have been hurried away before we had been many hours in the place, as Mr. Stephens and as Lord Lindsay were; and having by our determined opposition to Hussein frustrated his original plan, it was soon evident that an attempt would be made to extort money from us, or to prevent our visiting any of the excavations.

Having selected a favourable position for our encampment, above the southern bank of the stream, and commanding a view of the whole valley, Mr. Roberts strolled away alone among the ruins, while we were arranging the tents and baggage. He had scarcely seated himself and opened his sketch-book, when he was interrupted by three or four wild-looking Arabs, and thought it most prudent to return to the tents. We then went altogether to one of the temple-looking excavations on the eastern cliffs, and were scrambling up the bank of loose stones and rubbish before the

entrance, when three Fellahs and a very ill-looking negro came from the interior, armed with clubs, and, in the most violent and menacing manner, opposed our further progress. In short, we found that a guard had been placed at every corner, and it seemed as if they were determined to confine us to our own tents while we remained. Instead of a single solitary Arab, wandering among the ruins, as seen by some former visitors to Petra, they appeared to be in considerable force; and it was evident that some plot was on foot, from which we might find it difficult to extricate ourselves.

We were not much afraid of an open attack, for we saw that Sheich Hussein was a person of whom they stood in some dread, and any violence offered to us must have occasioned a feud with the Alloeens; but although we did not apprehend any danger to our lives, we were by no means sure that Hussein himself might not connive at a design on our purses, if money could be extorted, either by exciting our fear or restraining our curiosity. It was difficult to imagine how the Fellahs had got such timely intimation of our approach, as to make all this preparation, unless from the Alloeens; and knowing how much it is his interest to make the approach to Petra as difficult as possible, and to hurry travellers away as soon as he can, we had little doubt that Sheich Hussein himself was at

the bottom of the whole scheme. We were resolved, therefore, to carry the obstinacy and madness, of which he had complained in the morning, as far as we could with any appearance of safety.

We immediately returned to our tents, talking very loud, and assuming as great an appearance of excitement as the Arabs themselves, and sent for the two sheichs, who on entering the tent looked somewhat surprised at the formidable and rather ostentatious display of arms which we were preparing. Magabel looked on in silence, but Hussein was evidently a little embarrassed. He turned to Ismael, who was ramming the charge into a pistol with great energy, and, laying his hand on his arm, asked what in the name of Allah we were going to do; did we all want to be killed? "Shoof ya sheich al Arab," replied he, "you know that we came to see these old habitations, and Inshallah! we shall see them. What are these Fellahs that they should prevent us? We are under your protection, now let us see what it is worth."—"Stay, stay," said Hussein, evidently getting nervous, "be patient, O Effendee. Put away these pistols—stay in the tent—let me speak to Sheich Magabel. Inshallah! everything shall be done that you want." Well, we said, we would wait a quarter of an hour; if he had not then made some arrangement with Sheich Magabel—

if we were obliged to leave Wady Mousa—he had broken his engagement, and forfeited the money to be paid him at Hebron.

In a few minutes the two sheichs returned, and having seated themselves, Magabel reminded us that we had no right to come into his country; and that the Alloeens, as Sheich Hussein knew very well, had no right to bring us there. Not wishing to appear inhospitable, he had allowed us to enter Wady Mousa, and to rest our party on their journey; "and now," he continued, "you may rest here for a day, or two days if you please, but you must remain in your tents." All this we knew was only the prelude to a demand for money. We replied, that we had come from a great distance to see the old habitations in the valley—that we had paid Sheich Hussein for bringing us here for that purpose; if he had no right to bring us, he was to blame and not us; but having come to see the ruins, we would see them.

"But what would you do, O Effendee?" said Sheich Magabel; "will you risk your own lives and ours for a little money?"

"No," we replied, "we will not leave Wady Mousa without giving you a suitable present."

"Tayeeb, well; but as your present must be divided among my men, it would be better to settle the amount of it now."

As there was evidently no evading this demand, we asked the sheich what sum he expected for his permission to remain, and protection during our stay.

"You are my friends," he said, "what is money between us? give me a thousand piastres*; I would ask twice as much from any one else."

"A thousand piastres! a thousand piastres! O Sheich!" we all exclaimed at once, "what do you take us for, or what are we, that you talk of such sums of money? If you would have a thousand piastres from us, you must come to Musr for it. We have a few hundred piastres here. We will give you three hundred; if you will take it, well—if not, we have no more to say."

After a little hesitation our offer, as we had expected, was accepted; and we made a regular agreement with the sheich that we were to remain as long as we pleased, and to go wherever we pleased; and that he made himself responsible for the safety of ourselves, our servants, and all our property. While we were paying over the money, old Sheich Abed entered, and seated himself near the door of the tent. He looked on in silence while Sheich Magabel counted over the pieces of gold; but, when he saw him deliberately fold up the money in an old handkerchief and

* About 10*l.*

stuff it into his bosom, the old man started on his feet, exclaiming, "What, am I forgotten? Am I nobody here—am I to have nothing?" "You!" replied the other, quietly adjusting his dress, "you are nobody—you are no more here than a little child." We said, however, that we intended the money to be divided between them; and as Sheich Hussein also interfered in behalf of old Abed, Magabel paid him over 150 piastres. But he tossed down the money with an air that seemed to say, "Take it! but you shan't keep it long."

The best part of the afternoon was occupied with this negotiation; and, about four o'clock, we left the tents, taking two of the Arabs with us, and proceeded towards the ravine in which the beautiful excavation, called the Khasne, stands. As we walked on, we met different parties of the Fellahs leaving the posts at which they had been stationed, exchanged salutations with them, and everything appeared to be now placed on an amicable footing.

Passing the theatre, and taking a hurried glance at the surrounding excavations, we followed the stream into a narrow defile, overgrown with luxuriant oleanders. Nothing can be more wildly romantic than this pass, or more unlikely to terminate, as it does, in one of the most extraordinary works of art in the world. In fact, the

Khasne owes much of its effect to the suddenness with which it bursts on the sight, and the strange contrast which its fanciful design, and the freshness of its colour, form with the rugged and weather-stained crags by which it is surrounded. Standing, as it were, in an immense niche in the face of the rock, the whole edifice has been wonderfully preserved from the effects of the weather; while the fine colour of the stone, which is a beautiful pink, and the perfect preservation of the most minute details, and delicate carving, give it all the appearance of having been recently finished. On a second glance, you observe that one column of the portico has been thrown down, and that the statues with which it has been ornamented are much dilapidated; but this can hardly be the effect of time alone, which has left untouched parts far more delicate and more exposed.

The portico consists of four columns with Corinthian capitals, supporting an entablature and pediment richly sculptured. The columns are about thirty-five feet in height, and three feet in diameter; and on each side of the portico a pilaster of the same order is sculptured on the rock, and the whole design extended so as to form a colonnade of six pillars. Between each of these pilasters and the column next to it, there has been a colossal equestrian figure in alto-rilievo. These are both much

mutilated. The entablature is ornamented with vases connected by festoons of flowers; and in the centre of the pediment stands an eagle with extended wings. The superstructure is rather fanciful. It consists of a small circular temple, supported by Corinthian pillars, and surmounted by an urn, flanked by two small square temples of the same order. All the friezes and capitals are very richly sculptured.

The steps up to the portico are broken, and overgrown with grass and wild flowers. At each end of the vestibule there is an excavated chamber about sixteen feet long, by five or six in width. The doors into these apartments, as well as that of the principal chamber, are very richly ornamented. The great chamber is about forty-five feet square, and perhaps twenty-five in height. Opposite the entrance is a smaller apartment, and on each side of the principal chamber two others. The entrance admits sufficient light into the great chamber, which, as well as the smaller ones, is without any ornament.

There is nothing in the interior of this structure to indicate its having been used as a tomb; and from the style of the architecture, and the arrangement of the chambers, my impression is that it was a temple. Such a structure, entirely sculptured from the solid rock, is altogether a very wonderful

effort of human labour and skill; and the beauty of the details, and the freshness imparted to the whole by the fine colour of the stone, strike one more forcibly from the wild and romantic character of the scenery by which it is surrounded. It is called by the Arabs *El Khasne Faraoun*, "the treasury of Pharaoh;" and as they imagine the urn by which it is surmounted to be filled with gold, many a shot has been fired at it in the hope of bringing down the coveted treasure.

On the following morning (March 7th), Mr. Roberts and I set out pretty early on a ramble among the ruins in the neighbourhood of our encampment. We had no intention of wandering far from the tents; but, led on by the increasing interest of the scene, from one object to another, we soon found ourselves at the entrance of a ravine, into which the brook of Wady Mousa flows, at the western end of the valley. It was, perhaps, not over-prudent to wander so far alone, but, in the excitement of the moment, we had forgotten our resolution not to venture far from the tents without protection; and we continued to scramble on, over rocks and ruins, till we were out of sight, and far out of hearing of our friends.

We found the banks of the stream, after it enters this ravine, so thickly overgrown with oleander and other shrubs, and the passage so

encumbered by large masses of fallen rock, as to prevent our proceeding very far. On retracing our steps, we came to a path which led us to an elevated terrace, but in the face of the rock, in front of a row of excavations. None of these displayed any architectural ornament, but were simple, square apartments; one of the largest being divided by a built partition. Following this terrace, we came at length to a place where the rock had fallen down, and beyond which we could not pass. The precipice sunk at once into a deep and gloomy chasm below; while the rock, on the opposite side of the ravine, rose in an almost unbroken line like a stupendous wall. The excavations extended in every direction. In some places we could see fragments of flights of steps, and in others the mere indications of former "dwellings in the clefts of the rock," which had long since mouldered away from the face of the cliff.

We had not seen a single Arab during our walk; but as we approached the tents the party there appeared to be considerably increased, and in some confusion. On leaving his tent in the morning, Mr. Pell had observed a fellow skulking rather suspiciously among the rocks immediately above our encampment; presently two or three long guns appeared above the bushes; another, and another Arab, came creeping on in the same

stealthy manner; and at last the whole party started up, and with loud shouts rushed past the tents to the bivouac of our Bedaween allies. They were a branch of the Fellaheen of Wady Mousa, who, having heard of our arrival, and of the "black mail" we had paid, had come to demand their share of the money. The tumult was at its height when we reached the tents; one savage-looking fellow had brought the muzzle of his gun within a few inches of old Sheich Abed's breast, and the whole valley rang with their clamour. The Alloeens kept aloof from the contest, and Sheich Magabel looked on in silence. He was either too dangerous a person to meddle with, or, which is not improbable, he had himself set on this party to rob old Abed of the 150 piastres, which had been so unwillingly yielded to him the day before. The whole brunt of the attack, however, fell on the old man. After a few vain attempts to remonstrate with his turbulent clansmen, he pulled the money from his bosom, and dashing it to the ground, cursed them and their fathers to the lowest depths of Jehennem; while they gathered up the pieces of money, and sat down to divide the plunder.

To this succeeded a scene of which the quiet and orderly proceedings appeared the more extraordinary after the tumult and violence which we had

just witnessed. A dispute arose about a donkey which one of the new-comers was said to have stolen, and the three sheichs were called on to sit as judges on the case. The whole party were seated on the ground; and old Abed, who had just been robbed with such barefaced violence, opened this Arab court of justice with great gravity, by reciting part of the introductory chapter of the Koran, and what appeared to be some of the Bedaween laws, to which his audience listened with perfect decorum and great attention. While speaking, he held in his hand a drawn sabre, which at the conclusion of his address he laid down: it was then taken up by another; and so on by each successive speaker; and no one attempted to interrupt him who held the sword. When the case was settled to the apparent satisfaction of all parties, our unwelcome visiters left us, disappearing among the rocks as suddenly as they had appeared. We could not learn with any certainty who they were, or who Sheich Magabel was. He called himself guardian of the tombs. Hussein said that he was a notorious robber; and old Abed shook his head and groaned when we put the same question to him. Nobody, he said, had a right to receive tribute there but himself; that he was the sheich of Wady Mousa, but that the men whom we had seen in the morning were a branch of the tribe who had revolted from his authority.

After breakfast, we paid a second visit to the Khasne; and while Mr. Roberts was busy with his sketch-book, Ismael and I went to explore the ravine called El Syk, which forms the only entrance to Petra from the east. It opens immediately in front of the Khasne; but the passage is so narrow, and the entrance so choked up by the magnificent oleanders, which abound in every part of the valley, that it might easily be passed unobserved. It would be difficult, by any description, to convey a correct idea of this extraordinary passage. It seems as if the mountain had been rent asunder by some terrible natural convulsion, leaving this chasm, which extends for more than a mile in length, and is in no part above twelve or fifteen feet wide. In many places it is much narrower, and has been artificially widened, and the marks of the chisel remain perfectly distinct over the whole surface of these places, on both sides of the chasm. The rocks on each side rise to about a hundred feet in height, and in some places their rugged summits nearly meet, and cast a dark and gloomy shadow into the defile. Ivy and long trailing brambles hang from the rocky walls of this romantic avenue, and the wild fig-tree is seen on the top, waving its branches in the wind, which is never felt at the bottom of the ravine. The bottom is filled by the brook which flows through

the valley of Wady Mousa; but the waters were low, and we had only now and then to wade in the bed of the stream. On each side a channel is cut in the rock, above the level of the rivulet, to prevent the whole of the water from being absorbed by its sandy bed in summer, that a constant supply might be conveyed to the city. Several niches are cut in the rock on both sides, varying from one to three or four feet in height, with pilasters on each side. They are at irregular distances, and not all upon the same level; and in one or two there is something like the remains of the base of a statue. From the remains of masonry which lie in the bed of the stream, or are heaped against the sides of the chasm, it appears to have been covered with a pavement.

About two-thirds of the way between the entrance opposite the Khasne and the further extremity of El Syk, the rocks are connected at top by a bridge of a single arch. Even at that height there appear to be some remains of building; and it seems more probable that this bridge formed a regular communication between the opposite sides of the ravine, than that it was placed there merely for ornament. Below it, on each side, there is a niche for the reception of a statue; but the bridge itself is without ornament, or anything to give it the character of a triumphal arch; and, indeed, the

situation seems to be rather ill chosen for such a structure. After passing this arch the rocks are lower, and the passage opens into a wide meadow, dotted with bushes of oleander, and watered by the river of Wady Mousa.

As we were returning through the Syk, we met two Arabs who appeared to be of the party who had visited our tents in the morning. Ismael and I were quite alone, and, had it been possible, would very gladly have saluted them and passed on; but the way was too narrow for us to pass if they pleased to stop us; which they did, and asked, not in the most agreeable manner, for gunpowder. We said we had none; it was in our tent. "There is some here," said one of them, putting his hand on Ismael's pistols, "give us that." "No, no; tell him," said I, "that when it comes out of the pistol, he'll not be able to gather it up." They both laughed at this reply, and passed on; but I should have been sorry to have met them alone and quite unarmed, or if they had known that the pistols were not loaded; a fact which I thought my friend Ismael was on the point of betraying.

From the Khasne we returned between rows of excavated tombs, or dwellings, it is difficult to say which, to the theatre. It is an immense semi-circular excavation, containing thirty-three rows of benches, and capable of accommodating between

three and four thousand persons. It is in a wonderful state of preservation, the benches and the steps leading from the lower to the upper tiers of seats being nearly entire. Above the highest tier, there is a sort of corridor in which there are several doors leading to small excavated chambers. Above this the rock rises to a sufficient height to have shaded the whole audience from the sun. There are no remains of the stage, which was probably built, but the bases of the columns in the proscenium still remain in their original places, hidden amongst the grass and wild flowers.

Nearly opposite the theatre is an excavation in a large detached mass of rock, with an overhanging frieze of the Egyptian character, supported by two pilasters. There are several of the same character, and many others of various dimensions and differing in design; but it would be tedious to describe them all. A little further to the north is one of more elegant design, and in very good preservation. The front presents an entablature and pediment, surmounted by an urn, and supported by four columns. The entrance is some ten or twelve feet above the level of the ground; and the front of the edifice recedes considerably within the general plane of the cliffs, so that the rock extends about fifteen feet forwards on each side. This rock, on each side, is hewn out into an open gallery sup-

ported by five pillars; and the ground between these colonnades is supported on two tiers of built arches, forming a sort of platform or terrace in front of the entrance.

Among the numerous excavations in the cliffs which rise at the eastern end of the valley, there are two which surpass the others in extent and in beauty of design. One of these is somewhat like the Khasne, at least the upper part of it; but instead of the beautiful portico of that temple, it presents a front of eight Corinthian pillars. It is neither so elaborately ornamented, nor in such good preservation, as the Khasne. The other is of larger dimensions, and has four entrances leading to the same number of apartments. The entrances are handsomely sculptured, and supported by pilasters. The whole front has been four stories in height, and a row of fourteen pilasters extends across each of the three upper stories; but part of the rock has fallen down, leaving only two or three pillars of the highest tier, and it may possibly have risen to a greater height. The interior, like all the others which I entered, is hewn smooth, but without any ornament; and there are, in all the apartments, several recesses, about four feet above the floor, probably for the reception of the dead.

In the valley in which the principal part of the

city stood, you walk over mounds of ruins, of which so complete has been the destruction, that literally not one stone stands upon another. On the rocky bank overhanging the southern side of the stream, are the remains of a temple of large dimensions. No part of the building remains standing, but the bases of a colonnade along the front of the rocky platform show the extent of the building; and fragments of the pillars are thrown confusedly among the mass of ruins.

A little further west, the understructure of a bridge is distinctly to be traced; and beyond it are the ruins of a triumphal arch. Among the mass of fallen masonry there lies a large stone bearing a figure with extended wings, which probably occupied one of the angles above the centre arch. From the pilasters which remain, and fragments scattered around, the whole structure appears to have been overloaded with ornament.

A broad pavement of large flags extends westward from the triumphal arch to the temple called by the Arabs Kaszr Bint Faraoun, "the palace of Pharaoh's daughter." It is the only constructed edifice of which any considerable portion remains standing. Part of the cornice and frieze on the eastern side remain entire; the interior appears to have been rather profusely ornamented with bas-reliefs in stucco; and there is nothing very

interesting or attractive about the ruin, except that it is the only one remaining of this vast city which is not levelled with the ground.

But the most extraordinary of all the monuments of Petra, is that called by the Arabs El Dier, or "the convent." Nothing can awaken a more striking idea of the indefatigable labour of the ancient inhabitants of Petra, than the access to this temple.

We entered one of the narrow ravines at the western end of the valley, so choked up with masses of fallen rock, and overgrown with oleander and tamarisk, that we could have proceeded a very little way without the assistance of our Fellah guides. They led the way, scrambling over the rocks, and pushing through the thickets, till we came upon the extraordinary path by which human industry has worked its way to a situation otherwise inaccessible to all but the eagle that was soaring over our heads.

A succession of terraces have been cut along the face of the rock; from each of which you ascend by a flight of handsome steps to the next. One of these flights of steps extends over a space of more than a thousand feet. The wild naked rocks rose high above our heads, and fearful abysses yawned beneath us, as we ascended this singular path; the silence was broken only by

our own voices and the low rushing sound of the brook faintly heard in the distance; and I could not help feeling that a single traveller would here be too much in the power of his guides. A single push might precipitate him into one of these gloomy chasms, and the manner of his death remain for ever undiscovered. We, to be sure, were in no danger from any treachery on the part of the Fellahs; for we had no confidence in their professions of friendship, which, to say the truth, had never been very cordial; and we had taken the precaution of bringing two of the Alloeens with us.

The ascent terminates at a little green valley surrounded by high rocks, and at a great height above the ancient city. On one side of the valley stands the temple called El Dier, sculptured on the face of the rock. It is in very perfect preservation, with the exception of the steps up to the entrance. The design is somewhat like that of the Khasne, but without its elaborate sculptures; and although the style is rather fantastic, the defects of the architecture are overlooked in contemplating the gigantic proportions of the whole structure. The idea of sculpturing a monolithic temple of such enormous dimensions from the solid rock, appears to belong to a race of giants.

It contains only one apartment, about fifty feet

square, and perhaps thirty in height, which, like many of the other excavations, has been used by the Arabs for confining their flocks of goats, some of which we saw feeding in the valley. Opposite the entrance there is a recess, six feet deep and twelve wide, containing an altar with four steps on each side. Immediately over the altar, a Greek cross has been painted on the wall, and may still be distinctly traced; and it is not improbable that this temple may at one period have been used as a Christian church.

On the opposite side of the valley from El Dier, is a large excavated chamber, the entrance of which is about twelve or fifteen feet above the level of the valley itself. The rock in front of the excavation extends about twenty feet forwards, forming a terrace, along the edge of which are the bases of a colonnade. At the extremity of the apartment is a niche, with pilasters on each side, neatly enough carved, but defective in taste. The excavated chamber appears to have been the adytum of a small temple which was built in front of it.

The view from this elevated valley is very grand. On one side is the great Monolithic Temple and the valley of Petra, with its sculptured façades faintly seen in the distance below; on the other, Mount Hor rising amidst a chaos of rocks, and cutting the clear blue sky with his ragged peak.

I have endeavoured to give as minute a description as possible of these curious remains; but I feel how very inadequate all I can write must be to convey anything like a correct idea of the extent or of the general appearance of the ruins. It is impossible to examine every part of the remains of this deserted city during the few days which any traveller has been allowed to spend here; and when we find such a stupendous monument as El Dier in a situation apparently inaccessible, and which no traveller could reach without the assistance of the Arabs of the place, and when we find them pretending ignorance of those monuments which are already known, it seems not unreasonable to believe that others, equally important, may exist in some of those lateral defiles which we found inaccessible beyond a short distance.

One is struck with the prodigious labour which must have been expended in cutting perpendicular and smooth such a vast extent of rock, in excavating the numerous and spacious chambers, and sculpturing those highly ornamented façades which adorn their entrance. Everything bears testimony to the great wealth of the city at the period when these works were in progress. It was the common centre at which the whole trade of Arabia, Egypt, and Syria, met; the source from which all the precious commodities of the East found their way

to Egypt, and by Arsinoe, Gaza, Tyre, and a variety of subordinate routes to the Mediterranean*. It is now "a desolate wilderness"—"small among the heathen, and despised among men"—a standing memorial of the fulfilment of those denunciations which were pronounced against it long before many of its most splendid monuments were in existence.

From the Greeco-Roman character of the architecture of many of the excavations, it is probable that they do not belong to an earlier period than the second century, when Petra became the capital of a Roman province; and even those which are of an earlier date appear to belong to a variety of periods. The prophecy—"Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord, They shall build, but I will throw down"—seems to intimate that the cities of Edom would be destroyed and rebuilt before all the desolations denounced against her were fully accomplished.

There is abundant evidence of the complete fulfilment of the prophecies against Edom, without descending to those minute and literal details to which so much importance has been attached. I have seen nothing to confirm the statements we have read, of the very minute coincidences between

* Vincent's Commerce of the Ancients.

the present condition of this country and the *very words* of prophecy; as if there were not a plant or an animal mentioned in the highly figurative description of the desolation which was to come upon Edom, that might not be found in or near this deserted city. The works of travellers have been referred to, and quoted, sometimes not very accurately, in support of this literal mode of interpretation; and some liberties have been taken even with the sacred text itself.

The prophecy, "None shall pass through it for ever and ever," is one of those which are said to have been literally fulfilled. But surely any one coming from Akaba, at one extremity of the land of Edom, and, after penetrating to the capital city, passing northward towards Palestine, may be said, in the ordinary acceptation of the words, to have passed through the country. Nor is the route eastward so entirely unfrequented as has been supposed. While we were in Wady Mousa, a party of merchants, with camels and merchandise, arrived in the valley, and bivouacked beside us one night. They were on their way from Gaza to Maan—the ancient Teman—and told us that they made the same journey once every year, and paid tribute to the Arabs for passing through their territory.

But the entire passage is as follows:—"And

the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch; it shall not be quenched day nor night; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever and ever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; *none shall pass through it for ever**." Now nobody pretends that the first part of this passage is literally applicable to the present condition of Idumea; and there is surely a manifest impropriety, in either detaching the last clause from the preceding context, or in interpreting the last clause literally and the rest figuratively.

I believe it is the opinion of many commentators, that the prophecy has a double application, to the visible and to a mystical Edom, as the prophecies against Babylon are applied in a secondary sense to Rome, the mystical Babylon; and the fulfilment of the prophecy against Idumea appears to be complete, in its ceasing to be the great thoroughfare through which the commerce of the surrounding nations passed.

Thorns do "come up in the palaces" of Petra, "nettles and briars in the fortresses thereof;" but not to any very extraordinary extent; nor indeed do they grow in such rank luxuriance as I have seen them among other ruins. A bramble may be

* Isaiah, xxxiv. 9, 10.

seen growing out of the rock near the top of some of the monuments; but it is quite an exaggeration to say, that the thorns *rise to the same height with the columns*, or that the bramble *reaches to the top* of the monuments. And, in fact, the plants which grow most luxuriantly in the valley and the neighbouring defiles, so as to give a character to the scenery, are the oleander, tamarisk, and white broom; and numbers of small purple hyacinths spring up everywhere among the ruins.

The only birds of prey which I observed were some white vultures, which were generally seen in pairs, soaring above the valley, or perched upon the rocks. Partridges, pigeons, a species of blackbird, and numbers of small singing-birds, were seen every day. I neither saw nor heard the screech-owl, nor did we see any venomous reptile, except one small scorpion, which was brought in one morning by Sheich Hussein. The wild goat, called by the Arabs *tetal*, frequents the mountains around the valley, and also an animal which, from Sheich Hussein's description, appeared to be a wild boar. The whole propheey appears to be a description in highly figurative language of the desolation to be brought upon Edom; and it is impossible to look on the present condition of the ruined and deserted city of Petra, without feeling how amply the prediction has been fulfilled.

"Bozrah *has* become a desolation, a waste, and a curse"—she is "small among the heathen, and despised among men"—"thorns come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof"—the Lord has "stretched out his hand against and made her most desolate."

The ruins of Petra teach a far more impressive lesson than is to be learned in curiously searching after these minute literalities. We see in her present condition, not only the accomplishment of all the denunciations against Edom, but a warning of the certainty with which all God's righteous denunciations against sin will be fulfilled; and if we read the lesson aright, every fragment of that desolated city will appear to address us with the solemn admonition: "Think ye that they were sinners above all men, because they suffered such things; I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

I have little doubt that the Khasne, El Dier, and the excavation opposite to it, were temples. Those excavations which beyond any doubt were tombs, are a little removed from the immediate vicinity of the city; and of those on the cliffs at the eastern end of the valley it is not easy to determine whether they were intended as receptacles for the dead, or habitations for the living. They are at present without ornament in the inte-

rior; but from the appearance of the walls in that which contains four apartments, they seem to have been covered with stucco; and they may possibly have been as highly ornamented within, as they are externally. In some, the light is admitted by windows; and the recesses, supposed to have been for the reception of the dead, frequently appear spacious enough to have been sleeping apartments, and may, at all events, have been used for other purposes than that which has been assigned to them. Thousands of excavations in other parts of the valley, and in the lateral ravines, are merely square apartments, some of them of considerable dimensions, and occasionally divided by a built partition. I cannot help thinking that some of those long rows of excavations were dwellings; it is the mode which would naturally suggest itself to the people of extending their city, after the valley itself was already covered with buildings; and some expressions in the prophecy appear to favour this idea. At the same time, the expression, "Thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock," might with perfect propriety be applied to the city of Petra, although no such dwellings had been excavated in the rocky barriers which enclose it. The valley in which it stood is elevated considerably above the surrounding country, encircled by precipitous rocks, and approached by narrow and

dangerous defiles, in which a very small body of men might effectually check the advance of any hostile force, though greatly superior in numbers. No place could be better entitled, from the natural strength of its situation, to the appellation of *Bozrah*—"the fortified city;" and its inhabitants might truly be said, in the poetic language of the prophecy, to have "made their nest as high as the eagle."

Mehemet Ali, who has contrived to get most of the Bedaween tribes into his pay, has never been able to subdue the two or three hundred Fellaheen who occupy the valley of Wady Mousa. We were told by some soldiers, whom we afterwards met on the road to Gaza, and who expressed great surprise at our having escaped so easily from Petra, that troops had been sent there for the purpose of subduing the Fellaheen, and punishing them for some robberies committed.

The party advanced from Akaba, and entered Wady Mousa without opposition, but without seeing a single Fellah. For several days the valley appeared to be entirely deserted, and, but for the little cultivated spaces among the ruins, as utterly desolate as if it had remained for ages unoccupied except by the vultures, which wheeled their airy circles over the ruined city. Not a night however passed during which some of the tents were not

robbed, and the arms stolen, as if by some invisible hand; and even one or two soldiers, who had imprudently strayed from the encampment, were carried off, and never returned.

Fearing to penetrate the narrow and wild ravines which branch out from the valley, and finding their provisions fast decreasing, without any means of obtaining supplies, the party returned to Akaba, after losing one or two men, and a good many muskets, by an enemy whom they had never seen.

The account given us by the soldiers of this expedition, and of the tactics of the Fellaheen, exactly agreed with what we ourselves experienced.

Notwithstanding our bargain with Sheich Magabel, we had no confidence in the savages by whom we were surrounded; for we had no reason to believe that they would consider themselves bound by his engagement; and although the presence of the Alloeens secured us against any open attack, we were still exposed to the treachery of these robbers, who, in spite of any pledge given by the sheich, would have plundered our tents without scruple, whenever they found them unwatched.

We were obliged to employ the Fellahs as guides, for without their assistance we could never have found our way to some of the excavated

monuments; and some of them were at all times loitering about our encampment. To us they were civil enough, and one of their women and a little girl occasionally brought milk to our tents; but in our absence hints were given to our servants that we had paid too little, and that the sheich had no right to make the agreement he had made with us; and threats were held out that a further sum of money would be exacted, before we were allowed to leave the valley.

On the third day of our stay, while we were absent among the ruins, three or four Fellahs came loitering about the tents while our servants were preparing our dinner, which was cooked, of course, in the open air. One of these fellows snatched up a soup-tureen, which, being of tinned copper, he perhaps mistook for a more precious metal, and in an instant was lost among the rocks and bushes. He soon appeared again on a high rock above the tents, waving the stolen vessel over his head in triumph, and calling out that he would return for something else.

When we heard of this theft, on our return, we sent for Hussein and Magabel, and reminding them both of their engagement for the security of our property, insisted on the stolen article being returned. Hussein we had in our own power, or, to use his own expression, his head was in our

hands; for we had his written agreement, and could deduct the value of whatever was stolen, from the money we were to pay him on our arrival at Hebron. Magabel appeared to be highly indignant at the conduct of his clansmen after he had pledged himself for our safety, and eaten daily of our bread, and declared his intention to set out instantly in quest of the thief, and to bring back the stolen property. For this purpose he left us, and we had certainly very little hope of ever seeing him again.

Hussein now urged us to depart, as he was apprehensive of some more serious depredation on the part of the Fellaheen. We had determined to remain over the next day (Sunday); but agreed to start as early as he pleased on Monday morning.

We had all dined together in Mr. Pell's tent on Sunday evening; and as Mr. Roberts and I were returning to our own tent about ten o'clock, we were surprised to observe that all the Alloeens, with their camels, had left the bivouac, and that the fire was extinguished. The night was cloudy, with passing showers; and our servants told us that the Alloeens, expecting heavy rain during the night, had removed to one of the large excavations in the neighbourhood; but as Sheich Hussein slept that night in Mr. Pell's tent, and our servants were by us, and armed, we retired to

rest without any apprehension. We certainly never supposed that the Fellahs, with all their cunning, would attempt to rob our tents while we were asleep in them.

About midnight I was awakened by loud cries of "El Arab! robbers, robbers!" repeated in half-a-dozen voices, English and Arab. I started up, just as Mr. Pell, half-dressed, came to our tent; but on running out no one was to be seen except our own party. Mr. Pell then gave the following account of the robbery.

Sheich Hussein had asked permission to sleep in the tent, as the night was wet; and, at his request, Mr. Pell allowed his lantern to remain burning after they had gone to rest. About twelve o'clock, being scarcely asleep, he heard a rustling near him, and, opening his eyes, saw an Arab making his escapé under the curtain of the tent. He immediately reached to his pistols, which he had laid beside him on going to rest, and found that they were gone; and, rousing Ismael and Sheich Hussein, he gave the alarm. On leaving the tent, no one was to be seen, everything was perfectly still, and not a sound was heard except their own voices and the rushing of the brook.

The robbery was certainly boldly and cleverly executed. One or two of the tent-pins had been drawn on the outside, so as to allow the side of the

tent to be lifted up. In this manner the thief had crept in, and deliberately selected, from among the various articles of less importance, such as were of most value to these wild people—a pair of pistols, a bag containing powder and balls, a shot-belt, and a box full of wax candles; and, but for Mr. Pell's awaking, would no doubt have taken all the arms he could reach without disturbing the sleepers.

Our situation was by no means an agreeable one. No Fellah had been seen near the tents for some time before sunset, and we were still to all appearance quite alone in the valley; but we knew well that some of them could not be far off, and that a hundred might be concealed within a few yards of our encampment. To add to our discomfort, we could not help suspecting that Hussein himself had connived at the robbery. For the first time the Alloeens had removed from their bivouac, and left the tents unguarded; and it was at Hussein's request that the lantern had remained lighted, which served to facilitate the operations of the thief, and prevent his stumbling against any of the sleepers. Had the Alloeens remained at their posts, with their fire lighted, some of them would in all probability have detected the approach of the robber, and in their honest simplicity have given the alarm; and when Sheich Hussein was aroused, there was something about his appear-

ance that made Mr. Pell suspect that his sleep had been feigned, and that he was really awake while the thief was in the tent. We all knew that he coveted the pistols. He had given many hints that they would be an acceptable present, and finding these disregarded, had at last asked for them, and been refused.

Mr. Pell, hardly concealing his suspicions, turned the sheich out of his tent; the Alloeens were recalled, a fire lighted up, and a watch set, with orders to call the half-hours, and we once more retired to rest. One gets wonderfully accustomed to such adventures in this country; and, although in the narration it may appear sufficiently exciting to disturb one's rest, we slept very soundly, after arranging our tent in such a manner that no one could enter it without awaking us.

At the first appearance of dawn the tents were struck, and the camels loaded, and we left Petra without seeing a single Fellah.

The danger of visiting Petra is certainly much less than, by the accounts of early travellers, it appears formerly to have been; and, I believe, if Mr. Stephens and Lord Lindsay had insisted on remaining, when they were hurried away by Sheich Hussein, they might have negotiated with the Fellaheen as we did. They are formidable only from the impracticable nature of their country.

Unlike other mountaineers, they appear to be a cowardly race, and to justify the contempt in which they are held by the Bedaween* tribes around them; but their cunning and treacherous character, combined with their perfect knowledge of every bush and rock of the wild district they inhabit, renders them a dangerous people to be amongst. You are at no time safe from their depredations; for, although they will not openly attack a well-armed party, especially under the protection of so powerful a tribe as the Alloeens, they will individually take every opportunity of committing petty thefts; and, like the Indians of North America, they will insinuate themselves, like snakes, into your very tent while you sleep, for the purpose of plundering you, although they may have eaten your bread the same day.

At the same time, as the money paid by travellers for the use of their camels to the Owlád Sayd and the Alloeens, is also a sort of tribute for passing through their country; it is but fair that the Fellaheen of Wady Mousa should be paid also; and they complain, with justice, of the Alloeens entering their valley, and allowing their

* Fellah (plu. Fellaheen) signifies a cultivator of the ground, Bedawee, (plu. Bedaween) a dweller in tents. The inhabitants of towns are called Belladeen, and both they and the Fellaheen are held in contempt by the Bedaween.

camels to eat and tread down their corn, without making any compensation for the damage occasioned by their visits. Travellers ought always to communicate with one of the Fellah sheichs, and to make a bargain with them, as we did; they will then have the Fellahs for guides; and they have only to keep a strict watch over their encampment, and to have one of the Alloeens always with them; and they may remain in Petra in perfect safety for a week or ten days.

So far from Sheich Hussein having any fear of the Fellaheen, they appear to stand very much in awe of him; he has frequently exacted supplies of corn from them, and carried off their goats; and, I believe, there is nothing they dread more than a feud with the Alloeens. Unlike the Bedaween tribes, they disregard the laws of hospitality, and the engagements of their own sheichs; they may steal, but their fear of a "blood feud" will prevent their openly attacking any party under the protection of any of the Bedaween tribes around them. They may retire to their rocky fastnesses; but they know that their fields may be devastated, and their supplies from Akaba, and Maan, and Hebron, cut off by the Bedaweens, more easily than by the Pacha's troops.

Sheich Hussein is a perfectly safe person to treat with, as long as his present connexion with the

government exists, if you have the Pacha's firman and the other customary recommendations to him. His camels are employed to carry stores from Cairo to the fortress of Akaba, and he conducts the Hadgg caravan on part of its route to Mecca; and for these services he receives a certain rate of hire for his camels, and considerable presents of grain, dresses, shawls, &c., with every caravan. This is, in fact, a sort of Arab "black mail;" for the caravans were annually robbed by Sheich Meshal, an uncle of Hussein. The present arrangement, however, is more suitable to his character, which is by no means warlike; as it insures him a certain profit, without exposing him to any personal danger. Besides his regular pay and presents, he contrives to realise a considerable profit by the conveyance of the government stores to Akaba. He is responsible for the quantity of grain received at Cairo, and any diminution detected on its arrival at Akaba he is obliged to make good, at the price of the Cairo market; but as wheat is worth about 30 per cent. more at Akaba, he and the storekeeper at the fortress make a profitable trade by abstracting a portion of every supply, and paying for it *honestly* at the government price. Such a scheme could scarcely have originated with the Bedaween, but was probably suggested to him by the Turkish storekeeper; and is but one proof

how completely the simplicity of the Bedaween character has, in the case of Sheich Hussein, been corrupted by frequent visits to the capital, and intercourse with the petty officers of the government.

The Bedaweens still retain the same purity of life and simplicity of manners as in the days of the patriarchs: energetic, temperate, and capable of great endurance; holding sacred the laws of hospitality, and uncorrupted either by the luxuries or vices of cities. Their flocks supply the material from which their tents are formed; and these are so simple in their construction that, in all probability, they have undergone no change since the days of their progenitor Ishmael. Their clothing is of the same primitive character: a large mantle called an *abbayeh*; a garment of white cotton girt with a leathern girdle, and leaving the arms, and the legs from the knee downwards, bare; a pair of fish-skin, or hard leather sandals; and on the head a kerchief, called *keffieh*, hanging over the shoulders and bound round the head with a piece of camel's-hair rope, or a fillet of plaited worsted. The wealth of their sheichs, as in the days of the patriarchs, consists in flocks of sheep or goats, horses, camels, and "changes of raiment." Of the last some of the sheichs possess great store.

Like the Jews, the descendants of Ishmael remain a standing evidence to the truth of the prophecies regarding their race. They are a wild people; their hand is against every man, and every man's hand against them. Notwithstanding their apparent subjection for a time, and in particular districts, to the powerful governments in their neighbourhood, they have in reality maintained a continual independence, and remained unsubdued and unaltered; and even the present subjection of some of the tribes to the Pacha of Egypt has more the appearance of an alliance with an independent people. The Pacha is said to have the Alloeens and other powerful tribes in his pay; but the sheichs say that he pays them tribute for their forbearance in allowing the caravans to pass through their country. He has, in the mean time, checked their predatory incursions along the borders of the Desert; but their character remains unchanged, —they are restrained, but not subdued; and no sooner are the troops removed from any of the exposed districts, than the villages are plundered, the fields devastated, and the flocks driven off by the Arab tribes.

But although the sack of a village or the plunder of a caravan is with them a sort of honourable warfare, they are scrupulously honest where they have once pledged their word; hospitality and

fidelity to their engagements are their distinguishing virtues; and once under the protection of a Bedawee, the traveller and his property are in perfect safety, unless from an attack by some hostile tribe. While with the Beni Sayds and Alloeens, we never detected the slightest inclination to pilfer, and were never importuned for a present, except by Sheich Hussein himself. But he is a bad specimen of the Bedaween character; there is no end to his avarice, he will cheat you if he can; and his constant importunities for money, his endeavours to find out what present you mean to give him at Hebron, and his undisguised hints that he would like your pistols or your double-barrelled gun, are tiresome and disgusting.

While we were in Petra, he omitted no opportunity of pressing us to say that we would pay for the camels during our stay. We certainly meant to do so, but he had wearied and irritated us by his importunities, and we told him that we would promise nothing but what was in our written engagement. He then changed his tactics, and begged that we would advance him 1000 piastres, to purchase provisions and forage for his camels. We did so, but made him affix his signet to a receipt for the money: a mode of proceeding which the sheich appeared to understand perfectly, and to dislike very much.

Notwithstanding all this, Sheich Hussein is rather a remarkable character. Although one of the chiefs of a very powerful tribe, he is no warrior. Indeed his own followers did not scruple to say, "Hussein is a great coward;" but they added, "he can do more with his tongue, than all the other sheichs with their swords." Yet if you listen to his own stories of his warlike exploits, you would imagine him a perfect Rustan. He is certainly the most unblushing liar I ever met with; and when he has a point to carry, or wants to impress you with a high opinion of his importance, he will try to impose upon you the most monstrous inventions, although a day or two, or even a few hours, must expose their falsehood.

At Akaba, he insisted on our taking twenty-five camels, and gave a description of the country through which we were to pass; the falsehood of which, he must have known, would be exposed the very next day. He declared that, in addition to these camels, he had brought twenty of his men mounted on dromedaries as a guard; and that nothing would induce him to venture near Wady Mousa with a smaller force; and yet, when we came to start next morning, his whole party consisted of fifteen men, and eighteen camels and dromedaries, besides the animal he rode himself. He had left them at a short distance from the for-

tress, when he came to our tents, and all these falsehoods were for the purpose of extorting double the sum of money which he actually accepted for his services. Even in very trivial matters, and without any apparent object, he could not refrain from indulging in this vice, the besetting sin of the Arabs of the towns. While we were resting one day in the Wady Araba, he showed us his sabre, which had the names of the four Khaleefs on the blade, and which he said had belonged to his fathers for many generations; quite forgetting that he had told us only the day before, that he had got it from his friend Abd'al Khagg.

He is naturally of a very irascible temper, over which, however, he has most perfect command; and in all our disputes, except on the morning of our entering Petra, he never forgot for a moment the assumed politeness of his manner towards us; so different from the genuine kindness and natural good-breeding of his namesake, the Beni Sayd.

The traveller to Petra must expect to encounter all the difficulties, the fatigue, and the privations, which attend a long journey through the Desert; and these are, after all, not so very serious as I had anticipated. Sickness may occur, or accidents happen, where there is no possibility of obtaining medical assistance; and we have reason to be very thankful that we were preserved from anything of

this kind. Heat and thirst must be endured with patience; and the scanty fare, a hard bed on the sand, and a ride of ten hours a-day on a light-footed dromedary, are no very great hardships; and are an admirable cure for dyspepsia, and all the other ailments to which sedentary gentlemen at home are subject.

The most distressing privation is the want of water; and to this a large party are, of course, peculiarly exposed. Great care should be taken that the skins, in which it is carried, have been some time in use, and are well seasoned; as a new skin imparts a nauseous taste to the water in a few hours, and soon renders it unfit for drinking. It is of importance to accustom one's self to use as little water as possible; not to drink more frequently than is absolutely necessary, and to be satisfied with a single mouthful at a time. I have always found that large draughts increased the desire to drink, and that the feeling of thirst was more certainly alleviated by single mouthfuls of water taken at considerable intervals.

We left the valley of Petra nearly at the same point at which we had entered it, leaving to the left the ruins of a temple, of which a single column remains standing; and, passing the plain at the base of Mount Hor, crossed its southern limb by

a rocky and laborious path. The grey mists were rolling rapidly upwards, over the bare and rugged sides of the mountain; but the clouds gradually broke up, disclosing larger and larger portions of the blue sky; and the rain-storm, with which we had been threatened the evening before, passed away with only a gentle shower.

It may be questioned whether the present Gebel Haroun be really the Mount Hor on which Aaron died, as the whole range of Mount Seir was anciently called by that name; yet, from its height, and the conspicuous manner in which it rises among the surrounding rocks, it seems not unlikely to have been the chosen scene of the prophet's death.

From the top of Mount Nebo Moses saw the promised land, although he was not permitted to enter it; but with how different feelings must Aaron have cast his eyes from the summit of Mount Hor, over the "great and terrible wilderness," in which the children of Israel had so long wandered; the scene of all their murmuring and rebellion against the Lord, and of his own rebellion too, for which he was to die without even seeing afar off the land of Canaan!

We talked of ascending to Aaron's Tomb, a modern building, which crowns the highest peak; but Hussein urged us to proceed without delay;

and, after the example we had had of the treachery of the Fellaheen, we thought it might be more prudent to listen for once to his advice, and not to stop till we had placed the mountains between us and Wady Mousa.

We passed, on our road across the mountain, several ruins of little importance, and part of a Roman causeway constructed with large squared stones, which has probably been the regular road to Petra from the west; but instead of the deep glens with their luxuriant boscage of oleander, which we had passed through on our ascent, we had now to scramble down to the Wady El Ghor, over the rocky side of the mountain. The path was so rugged and precipitous that I dismounted, thinking myself safer on foot; but before long I was fain to mount again and take my chance of a fall, rather than suffer the pain of walking over the sharp rocks, which cut my feet at every step. It was a weary and painful march for the poor camels, and a thousand times worse than the road by which Hussein had declared that a loaded camel could not pass.

As we rode through the Wady El Ghor in the afternoon, we found a single Arab seated by a small fire, on which he was boiling his coffee-pot. He was Sheich Salem, Hussein's brother, who was returning from Hebron. He told us that he had

waited three days in this place in expectation of meeting us.

Sheich Hussein had been unusually obsequious all day; and, although we had refrained from alluding to the robbery of the previous night, he was evidently aware that his own conduct had excited our suspicions; and seemed inclined to avail himself of this meeting with his brother, to part company with us. He now proposed to leave us. "You know," said he, "that I must be in Cairo within forty days, to carry the stores to Akaba. I have my camels to collect, and many things to do before I set out. I will therefore leave you now, and return to my tents; Sheich Salem will conduct you in safety to Hebron."

This we would on no account consent to. We were resolved to bring him to an account for the property of which we had been robbed in Petra, and had not made up our minds whether we should not deduct the value from the money he was to receive at Hebron; and we wished to avoid coming to any explanation with him on the subject, until we got him within reach of one of the Pacha's governors. Once at Hebron, we had no fear of being able to enforce the terms of our written agreement, by which he had become responsible for the security of our property as well as our persons; but we were not sure that the agreement

would be held equally binding on Sheich Salem, if we allowed Hussein to leave us. We therefore, as politely as possible, but very decidedly, refused to proceed without him; and, as he had already learnt that we never altered a determination which we had once expressed, we heard no more of the matter.

Hussein was evidently displeased and sulky. In the evening he did not come to dine in our tent as usual, until we sent for him; and after dinner he rose and left us, without waiting for coffee.

Next morning (12th March), as we were preparing to start, a solitary Arab was seen approaching and making signs to us to stop; and, to our great surprise, we recognised our friend Sheich Magabel. He carried in his hand our soup tureen, which he had promised to recover, and which he now restored with many protestations of the satisfaction he felt in having made his face white before us. He expressed great concern on hearing of the manner in which we had been robbed after he left us, and assured us that everything should be restored. He was sure he could find out the robbers — we thought we could find one of them without going very far—and he would send all the things to Sheich Hussein, who could bring them to Cairo. Hussein too promised that, if he did not bring back the stolen articles, he would him-

self pay the value of them at the British consulate. This we were determined that he should do, and expressed our entire satisfaction with the arrangement, which, we had no doubt, would be honourably fulfilled on his part.

But Hussein's temper, which had been a little ruffled by our refusal to exchange his company for that of Sheich Salem, was by no means improved by this accidental interview with Magabel. His ill temper, too, appeared to have infected the dromedary that he rode, for it began to plunge about, and bolt from side to side, at the imminent risk of running some of us down. At last he came so close upon me that I put my hand on his shoulder and gave him a slight push, at which he was highly incensed; but another plunge brought him in collision with our friend Ismael, who, in his turn, gave him a push; and, the dromedary swerving at the same time, Sheich Hussein rolled ignominiously in the sand. He started at once on his feet, his face burning with anger, his eyes flashing, and the veins on his forehead distended, and his whole countenance expressive of the most savage rage.

"Cursed be thou and thy journey!" he exclaimed, turning to Ismael; but before the laugh occasioned by his fall—which was quite irresistible—had subsided, the sheich had recovered his self-

possession: his features relaxed into a smile, rather a grim one, and he affected to take the whole as a joke; but he was evidently in a passion; and, had it been safe, I dare say the vindictive ferocity of the savage might have displayed itself in a way sufficiently unpleasant for us. I had often admired the perfect command which he exercised over his temper, and the ease with which he appeared to forget the angry disputes which now and then arose between him and us. In half-an-hour after his fall he was riding along with us, chatting, and telling his usual lies about his adventures, and the splendid presents he had received, as if nothing had happened to ruffle his temper.

About mid-day we came to a small encampment of Bedaweens; and observing that they had a flock of goats and a few sheep, we rode towards the tents; for our larder was empty, and so fair an opportunity of replenishing it was not to be missed. While we were bargaining for a sheep, two women came to offer us milk. They had large rings in their noses, and, had they worn the veil, they might have passed for beauties, for their eyes were very fine, but their faces far from agreeable. The men were very civil, and did not ask more than three times the price which we paid them for the sheep.

About four o'clock, we came to a few bare,

leafless, stag-horn-looking trees, where Sheich Hussein proposed to halt, as it was the only place within many hours where firewood was to be found. Nothing can be more wearisome than travelling all day, with the whole day's journey and part of the next in sight, and nothing to vary the miles of flat, dreary waste that intervene; and although we had a good hour of daylight before us, none of us felt inclined to ride further. I believe most of the party were impatient for the death of the unlucky sheep, which had been trotting along with us for the last three or four hours, unconscious of its approaching fate.

When a sheep is killed, the Arabs generally contrive to make a feast from parts of the animal which we never think of eating; and on this occasion they appeared to be unusually merry. About eleven o'clock I walked out to see what might be the cause of the hearty *guffaw* that every two or three minutes broke the stillness of the night. What a scene it was! There was not a single speck of cloud in the heavens; and you, who have only seen the cold, inky-looking skies of our island, can scarcely imagine how intensely beautiful are the nights in this country. The innumerable host of stars appear, not as if sparkling on the concave surface of the heavens, and differing only in size and brightness, but floating at different and im-

measurable distances through the infinite ether: the Milky-way hangs like a luminous wreath athwart the heavens; and the moon, far more resplendent than she appears in our climate,

> Rolls through the dark blue depths:
> Beneath her steady ray
> The desert circle spreads,
> Like the round ocean girdled with the sky.
> How beautiful is night!

and how impressively does it demonstrate the being, and power, and majesty of the Creator. "The heavens declare the glory of God," no less than they "show his handywork."

Gazing on this countless assemblage of worlds, and suns, the centres round which myriads of unseen worlds are unceasingly performing their appointed revolutions, the imagination is overwhelmed in attempting to form any conception of the prodigious magnitude and splendour of the universe; and our own earth sinks in the comparison to a speck, less than a drop in the ocean, or a grain of sand in the boundless desert. Strange it seems, to the feebleness of our limited faculties, that this little remote spot in creation should hold so important a place in the councils of eternity, as Revelation tells us that it unquestionably does! And yet to conceive of the earth, and of the human race, as too insignificant to

occupy any portion of the regard of the Creator of such a universe, is, after all, but a false humility, as well as a most perilous error; for with God there is neither vastness nor insignificance, sublimity nor meanness, remoteness nor proximity of space or time, but an eternal present.

My contemplations were soon interrupted by another loud peal of laughter from the bivouac of the Arabs; and no sooner was I observed than invited to join the party. "Khowaga! ya Khowaga! *taal hinneh, taal,*"—"Come hither, come," was shouted out by half-a-dozen voices at once; and, calling Roberts from the tent, we both went and seated ourselves in the circle round the fire.

It was a scene for Salvator to have painted. The silvery appearance of the sand under the bright moonlight; the old naked trees, with their white, motionless, contorted branches and serpentlike shadows; the camels kneeling around the bivouac; the wild faces of the Bedaweens, reflecting the red light of the fire round which they were seated, their wild voices, and strange guttural language, all combined to produce an effect so startling, that I felt I had never till then been thoroughly sensible of our complete separation from the civilised world. Here we were in the midst of the Desert, seated with a set of roving Arabs round their camp-fire, the bright moon over our heads,

and the boundless sand around us,—it was an excitement worth experiencing for once.

When we joined the party, one of them was roasting the coffee-beans in an iron ladle over the fire; another pounded in a stone-mortar what had already been prepared; and Sheich Hussein himself was carefully superintending the coffee-pot. He had completely recovered his good-humour; and the whole party were as gay and happy as coffee and light hearts could make them. Infinitely more happy, surely, than ardent spirits could have made them. Long may they be preserved from that deadly poison!

The Arabs, even in the hottest weather, must have a large blazing fire; but we found the heat so intolerable, that, after a cup of coffee and a pipe, we were fain to return to our tents.

On the 13th, we were still crossing the Wady Araba; but we found the patches of thin grass becoming more frequent and more extensive, and occasionally mixed with crimson anemones, and other wild flowers.

About two o'clock we arrived at a well, or rather a pool, at which we had hoped to find fresh water; but, alas! we could almost smell it ten or twelve yards off. For some distance round the well the ground was deeply trodden by camels' feet; the water was full of their dung, and alive with most

unpleasant-looking little creatures. The water in the skins, bad as it was, was better than "the green mantle of the standing pool;" and we went on our way, comforting ourselves with the thought that we were fast approaching a "land of rivers of waters."

On the 14th, before noon, we crossed the range of barren hills which bound the Wady Araba on the west. The scenery is here most desolate and gloomy. The hills appear like enormous heaps of hard gravel and sand, thickly strewn with loose black flints. About an hour further, we crossed Gebel Asufar, a most laborious and difficult ascent, at first among loose, rolling stones, and then over a broad steep sheet of rock, very slippery, and burning hot from constant exposure to the sun. From Gebel Asufar we descended to an elevated plain of sand, covered with very scanty herbage, and tenanted by thousands of scarabæi and large black ants. Vegetation gradually improved as we advanced, the grass was thicker and greener, and the flowers more numerous—anemones, red tulips, and a great variety of which I am ignorant of the names,—and at sunset we encamped in Wady Kourmoub, not far from a ruined town of the same name.

Our tents were pitched before we discovered that we were close upon a Bedaween encampment in a

neighbouring hollow, which had concealed them from us.

They soon paid us a visit, bringing with them a large wooden bowl full of fresh camel's milk, of which they invited us to partake; and very grateful and refreshing it was. Sheich Hussein, however, did not appear to like our visiters, and they were no sooner gone than he told us they were notorious robbers, and that a strict watch must be kept round the tents during the night. Our feeling of security in their neighbourhood was certainly not increased by Mr. Roberts having found a human body, stripped, and half-devoured by jackals, among the ruins.

Next morning (the 15th) three of these Bedaweens came to our encampment, each armed with a long spear, and leading his horse by the bridle. As soon as the tents were struck, and the men began to load the camels, they mounted, and galloped off across the plain; a movement which appeared to occasion some uneasiness in Hussein's mind.

About nine o'clock we halted to breakfast, in a fine valley, where we saw a large herd of camels feeding; and sent one of the Arabs to get us some new milk. It is exceedingly good, and without any peculiar or unpleasant flavour.

During the whole of the previous day we had

seen immense flocks of cranes, evidently migrating towards the north. Several flocks passed over us as we were seated at breakfast; and numbers of stragglers were stalking about the valley, and picking up the unlucky lizards, and other small game that fell in their way. Hussein contrived, by creeping among the camels, to get near enough to shoot one of these fine birds, which he brought to us; but if it was done for our gratification, he made a sad mistake; for it was a piece of wanton cruelty, which none of us would have dreamed of perpetrating. It was a beautiful creature, and measured nearly eight feet across the wings.

The pastures became more luxuriant as we advanced, and in crossing the plain of El Foura the herbage reached to the knees of our dromedaries. Mr. Pell, Mr. Roberts, and I, were a little way in advance of the party, when we reached the little town of El Malek, which occupies an eminence about the middle of the plain, so regular in its form that it might almost be supposed to be artificial. The whole inhabitants appeared to be collected on the green slope under the town; and, as we passed, two or three Arabs came forward and stopped us; and when we asked what they wanted, answered very unceremoniously, "*floos*"—"money." "Ah! don't you wish you may get it?" said our friend Roberts; a reply which, not being

intelligible at this distance from the city of London, only produced the reiterated demand for "*floos, floos!*" We were soon joined by Sheich Hussein, between whom and the Arabs the usual salutations passed, with no great appearance of cordiality on either side. The sheich appeared to have no very favourable opinion of his acquaintances, and hurried us on.

Near this town are two fine Roman wells of hewn stone. They appear to be of considerable depth, and the uppermost course of stones, which are a sort of coarse white marble, are worn into deep grooves, by the frequent passing of the ropes over them. Around the wells were a number of stone troughs for watering cattle.

We had scarcely reached the opposite side of the plain, when the appearance of a large body of Arabs crossing one of the hills, about a mile off, frightened Hussein from his direct course; and he hurried us into one of the valleys, sending two of his party to reconnoitre along the heights. It was either a false alarm, or we had not been observed, for we saw no more of the party.

We were now once more among green hills, and rode on in high spirits till four o'clock, when a piece of beautiful green sward, thickly bestrewn with gay flowers, tempted us to pitch our tents. Just before reaching this place I narrowly escaped

a bad fall. We were riding along a very narrow track on the side of a pretty steep hill, when my dromedary stepped beyond the path, and slid down the bank below. I fortunately fell on the higher side of the path, or I might have had an awkward roll.

The rich green turf, and the gay flowers with which it was enamelled, proved a less comfortable bed than the dry sand of the desert. I awoke, stiff, and aching in all my joints, from the damp. The scenery now reminded me very much of the south of Scotland; the same round green hills; the little *burn* winding in the bottom of the valley "wi' bickering, dancing dazzle;" and the same thick, drizzling mist too, that forced me to draw my grey *maud* over my head—the first Scottish plaid, perhaps, that ever crossed these hills. As we descended, the mist gradually cleared away, and about nine o'clock we reached the village of *Semouah*, around which we saw many remains of Roman buildings. This may possibly be *Eshtemoa*, one of the cities of the hill country, which were allotted to the children of Aaron*. A few old men, and the women and children, alone remained in the village; for the conscription had lately been in operation, and the young men had fled to the mountains.

As we drew nearer to Hebron, the remains of

* Joshua, xxi. 14.

the old terraces on the hill-sides showed that the country had once been covered with vineyards; while the corn-fields in the valleys, and the herds of cows grazing in the rich pastures, awakened many recollections of home.

About twelve o'clock we came in sight of Hebron, called by the Arabs El Khalil Ibrahim, "Abraham the friend." It is a pretty, cheerful-looking town, beautifully situated on the slope of a hill, and surrounded by vineyards and olive-grounds. The great mosque, built over the tombs of the Patriarchs, rises conspicuously above the rest of the town; and, in riding towards the place where our tents were to be pitched, we passed a large square tank, with steps descending into it at the angles, which has been supposed, without any evidence, to be "the pool of Hebron," where David hanged the sons of Rimmon.

While we were arranging matters in our tents, a pretty little boy, about six or seven years old, entered, accompanied by a Greek servant, with a very polite invitation to take up our abode at the house of one Elias, a saraff, the only Christian in the place. We declined this invitation, believing that we should be more comfortable and independent in our tents; but presently the servant returned with a second message, begging that we would, at least, breakfast in the house next morn-

ing; that Elias was himself absent, but that the ladies entreated that we would honour them with our presence. There was no refusing this invitation.

In the mean time we were uncertain as to our future proceedings. The plague was in Jerusalem; and, although that would not have deterred us from going thither, the quarantine of twenty days, imposed on all persons leaving the city, would have been a serious inconvenience. To me, indeed, it was an insurmountable obstacle to my visiting Jerusalem at present. After further inquiries we determined to proceed to Gaza, from whence Mr. Pell might return to Egypt by way of El Arish; while Mr. Roberts and I continued our route along the coast to Beyrout.

The governor, we found, had gone to Jerusalem some time before, and was still absent; and we were received by his *vakeel*, or deputy, with as much politeness as could be expected from a very vulgar fellow "dressed in a little brief authority." He promised to procure the animals we required to take us to Gaza, and to send them to our tents the following evening, as we wished to start early the morning after.

We did not find the interior of the town to correspond with its external beauty. The streets are steep, dark, and very dirty, and the bazaars

neither extensive nor well stocked. The population is only about 4,000; of these, forty families are Jews, and Elias the Saraff and his family are the only Christians in the town. The Mooslims of Hebron have always had the character of being most bigoted and fanatical; and we found that it would be useless, if not dangerous, to attempt to enter their mosque.

It was one of the many churches founded by the empress Helena, the mother of Constantine, and was long an object of Mooslim pilgrimage. It is said to be built over the cave of Machpelah, and contains the supposititious tombs of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob, and Leah. For more than a century, only two or three Europeans have gained access to the mosque. Ali Bey, who visited it in 1807, and passed as a Mooslim, gives a minute description of the sepulchres which, he says, are each in a separate apartment, on the level of the floor of the mosque. All the sepulchres, according to his account, "have separate entrances, closed with iron gates, and by wooden doors, plated with silver, and secured by silver bolts and padlocks. The tombs of the patriarchs are covered with rich carpets of green silk, magnificently embroidered with gold; those of their wives are red, embroidered in like manner. I counted nine, one over the other, on the sepulchre

of Abraham. The rooms also which contain the tombs are covered with rich carpets." But this very circumstantial description is at variance with earlier accounts, which represent all the six tombs as in a cave under the mosque. Benjamin of Tudela, who visited Hebron in the twelfth century, gives the following description of the place*. "I came to Hebron seated on a plaine; for Hebron the ancient metropolitan citie stood upon an hill; but it is now desolate. But in the valley there is a duplicitie, that is, as it were, two little valleyes, and there the citie is placed; and there is an huge temple there, called Saint Abraham, and that place was the synagogue of the Jews, at what time the country was possessed by the Ismaelites. But the Gentiles, who afterwards obtayned and held the same, built sixe sepulchres in the temple, by the names of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob and Lia, and the inhabitants now tell the pilgrimes that they are the monuments of the patriarchs; and great summes of money are offered there. But surely to any Jew coming thither, and offering the porters a reward, the cave is showed, with the iron gate opened, which from antiquitie remayneth yet there. And a man goeth down with a lamp-light into the first cave, where nothing is found, nor also in the second, untill he enter the third, in which

* "Purchas his Pilgrimes."

there are the sixe monuments, the one right over against the other; and each of them are engraven with characters, and distinguished by the name of every one of them after this manner—*Sepulchrum Abraham patris nostri, super quem pax sit;* and so the rest, after the same example. And a lampe perpetually burneth in the cave day and night; the officers of the temple continually ministering oile for the maintenance thereof." Sanderson, who was in Hebron in 1601, agrees with the Spanish Jew in describing the tombs as in a cave under the church; but, in his time, pilgrims do not appear to have been allowed to enter the cave; "but at a square hole, through a thick wall, they might discern a little light of a lamp." "The Jews," he says, "do their ceremonies of prayer there without. The Moores and Turkes are permitted to have a little more sight, which is at the top, where they let down the oyle for the lampe."

Our servants who, being Mahommedans, were admitted into the mosque, could not give a very distinct account of what they had seen; but, from their description, it appeared that the sepulchres were in the mosque itself. They were only allowed, however, to look through the iron gate.

On the 17th, we had had high wind and heavy showers during the night, and I found the rain dropping through the roof of the tent, when I awoke in the morning.

Hussein was impatient to return home, and we accordingly met in Mr. Pell's tent, to pay him the balance of his 3000 piastres, and to settle all our remaining accounts with him. Although we were not bound to settle with him on any other terms than those of our written agreement, we made the same allowance for detaining his camels at Petra, which we had paid the Beni Sayds for remaining at Mount Sinai. Beyond this we had no intention of giving him anything; but as it is customary to make him some present at the end of the journey, and as we wished to part in good terms with him, notwithstanding our suspicions of his honesty, we gave him two silk dresses, which were purchased for him in the bazaar. At the same time, we reminded him of his responsibility for the property which had been stolen at Petra, and assured him that he would be called on, either to restore the stolen articles, or to pay their value, as soon as he appeared in Cairo, where he and Mr. Pell would probably arrive about the same time*.

Sheich Hussein did not appear much pleased

* Since my return home, I have received a letter from my friend Hanaffee Ismael, in which he says, "I claimed the property stolen from us in Petra from Sheich Hussein the Alloeen, on his arrival in Cairo, and have recovered it all. The pistols, boxes, bags, everything were in his possession, and were given up; and I have no doubt that he had himself instigated the Fellahs to rob us."

with this announcement, but he had no opportunity of making any reply, for at that moment a sudden gust shook the tent; the cords slackened, the pins on the windward side gave way, and we were all buried together under the mass of wet canvas. When we had extricated ourselves from our awkward situation, we had no time to think of Hussein. There was evidently little comfort to be expected in the tents, amidst a storm of wind and rain; and we resolved not only to breakfast, but to offer ourselves as guests, at the house of Elias, whither we hastened.

We were received very kindly by the *Sitt Helani*, "the lady Helen," a good-looking young woman of three or four-and-twenty, the wife of Elias, and by his mother, a very nice old lady, who had evidently been a beauty in her youth. They had provided an excellent breakfast, and appeared delighted at the thoughts of having us to live in the house.

As we entered, the *Sitt* held out her hand, which in my simplicity I would have shaken, after our fashion, when she took mine, and, bowing down, kissed it, and touched it with her forehead. Her sister Marianne, a laughing girl of sixteen, went through the same ceremonious salutation; and nothing could induce either of them to eat with us, or even to sit while we ate. All this, however, ap-

peared to be more a matter of etiquette than anything else. These young ladies might think it a very improper familiarity to sit and eat with us; but they were troubled with no awkward bashfulness, and chatted without reserve or intermission while we ate our breakfast.

I have no doubt that the plague had reached Hebron, although it had not been officially noticed, nor any quarantine established. There had been four or five deaths the day before we arrived; on the 17th there were six; and this day (the 18th) seven funerals. The "mourning women" were heard continually in the streets; and groups of females, enveloped in their long white veils, were all day seated among the tombs, screaming and slapping their faces, or sitting in mournful silence by the new graves.

Every hour that we remained was at the risk of having a quarantine imposed upon us; we were impatient to depart; and, as neither camel nor mule had yet appeared at our tents, we once more bent our steps towards the serai. We found the *vakeel* in conversation with an officer who was conducting a party of conscripts to the head-quarters at Gaza. They were seated on a *mastabbah* in the open court, and at a little distance from them stood a carpenter-looking man, with his sleeves tucked up, his hammer in hand, and a heap of oblong

billets of wood at his feet. On the opposite side of the court, two soldiers were standing sentry by a strong door, with a square iron-grated aperture in it, through which the face of a prisoner might be seen, from time to time, looking anxiously forth.

The unlucky inmates of this dungeon were conscripts who had tried to escape. At a signal from the *vakeel*, the door was opened, and the conscripts were brought out one by one. Each, as he came forward, had his wrists placed in a square wooden billet of this form ; a bar of wood was then firmly nailed over it; and, thus handcuffed, they were to be marched a weary journey of two days to Gaza. They were mostly young men; but one unfortunate *Sheich el Bellad,* who had failed to bring back a deserter belonging to his village, was handcuffed and marched off in his stead.

In answer to our complaint, that he had not kept his promise to send us the camels, the *vakeel* protested that he had sent an order to the sheich of the camel-drivers, to furnish us with whatever beasts we required, and if they were not arrived, Inshallah! they would come to-morrow.

"And if they do not come to-morrow," said the agha, "you can go with me. I have soldiers. Wallah! you will be safe with me."

I believe they wanted to force the agha's protection upon us, that there might be a pretext for demanding *baksheesh*. We replied that we were quite able to protect ourselves, and could not wait for the pleasure of his company; and as to the order to the sheich of the camel-drivers, we did not believe that any such order had been sent.

Oddly enough the sheich entered at that very moment, and was received with a storm of abuse from the vakeel. He stood very patiently, with his hands folded in his sleeves; but it was evident from his bewildered look, and the anxiety of the vakeel to prevent him from speaking, that he had received no order for the camels. The poor man looked first at us, then at the vakeel, and made one or two unsuccessful attempts to speak.

"O thou most unlucky! did we not send to thee for camels for these Ingles?" said the vakeel.

"By Allah! O Effendee! your—"

"O, dog! thou wouldst lie to us. O! be silent —be silent."

"By your soul, O Effendee!—"

"Give him the *koorbadj*," whispered the agha.

"Ah, the hog! give him the *koorbadj*," cried the vakeel; and two fellows started forward and seized the poor sheich by the shoulders, while a third, with the koorbadj in his hand, tucking up the sleeve of his right arm, was preparing to strike, when we

interfered. There was no cause for punishing the man, we said; it was evident that he had received no orders about the camels; we felt ourselves very ill-used; and would assuredly complain of the treatment we had experienced, if we were detained longer than noon.

We were then told, that, having the Pacha's firman, a ckawoss would be sent with us; and that we might seize on any camels we could find. This was not a very agreeable mode of proceeding, but it appeared to be the only way of getting out of our dilemma. We had seen some camels at a khan which we passed in the morning, and thither we went, accompanied by the governor's ckawoss.

We tried at first by fair means to hire the beasts we wanted; but, although their camels were standing idle, not a man would engage on any terms to take us to Gaza. We were in the Nizam dress, and there was no mistaking Ismael's Egyptian face; and the people evidently suspected that we were on the Pacha's service, and that our promise to pay them so much above the usual government rate was not very likely to be fulfilled. We had no alternative, then, but to act in the character which they were determined to force upon us; to take the camels, and pay the hire we had promised on our arrival at Gaza. Six camels were accordingly taken to carry the tents and baggage;

and the ckawoss was sent in search of asses for us to ride, as neither mules nor horses were to be got.

The tents were struck, and the baggage arranged; and the camel-drivers were proceeding unwillingly to load their beasts, when the ckawoss appeared, driving half-a-dozen donkeys before him. We did not think of inquiring whose they were, or how they had been procured; and I was busy arranging a blanket on one of them, by way of saddle, when we were surrounded by a crowd of old men and women, who entreated us most earnestly not to take away their asses. It was rather a perplexing scene, for we had felt some compunction in forcing the camel-drivers to go against their will. It was in vain that we promised payment. "But we are not going to steal your asses, O Sheich; you shall be paid—you shall fix the price yourself." "May your bounty be extolled, O Effendee," replied an old grey-bearded Arab; "but who will bring them back to us? We are old. We cannot go to Gaza."

It was clear that, whatever we might do with the camel-drivers, who were sturdy fellows, we could not take the asses of these poor people; and they were accordingly released, greatly to the delight of the owners, and much to the surprise of the ckawoss, and two or three soldiers who were looking on.

Late in the afternoon we started on foot, and rode a little way on the camels; but notwithstanding our dromedary-riding for a month before, I found the twisting motion of the camel so intolerable, that, although we only travelled four hours, it was one of the most uncomfortable journeys I ever made. Any one who is in the habit of riding on horseback will find no great fatigue or inconvenience in riding a dromedary, though his very long step is at first a little unpleasant; but the camel has a heavy, jolting gait, and as he moves both feet on each side together, your back is twisted at every step, and your head is kept nodding like a Chinese joss. The consequence is an acute pain in the small of your back, and the back of your neck.

In the evening we encamped beside Tergoumi, a small village, surrounded by pasture and cornfields. As we unloaded the camels, and pitched our tents, the villagers watched our proceedings from a little distance; but no one bade us welcome, or offered us any assistance.

Next morning (19th March) we had a regular mutiny among the camel-drivers. They refused to allow their camels to be loaded, or to move a step further, unless we paid them, on the spot, the hire which we had promised them at Hebron; and they appeared to be backed by some of the

men of the village. We had offered to pay them one-half at Hebron and the remainder at Gaza, which is the usual practice; and of course we would not consent to do any more here. Even this seemed partly to remove their suspicions of our character, and we started evidently on a better understanding.

We were now in a cultivated country, among corn-fields and olive-plantations. There is abundant evidence of the almost inexhaustible fertility of the soil in the rich crops which are produced by a very rude and imperfect system of husbandry, and in the rank luxuriance of the vegetation which covers the uncultivated portions of land.

At every village we found remains of the architecture of an earlier age, in the fragments of granite and marble pillars used in the construction of modern houses, and of the wells from which the villages are supplied with water. These remains are very numerous at a village called Bed el Gebrim, near which are the ruins of a Roman arch, and other indications of its having been a place of some importance. We saw, at the same place, several subterranean granaries, similar to those under the ramparts at Malta.

From hence to Gaza, the country is beautifully varied with corn-fields and rich pasture lands, interspersed with clumps of trees and old olive-groves.

The olive-grounds and gardens are more numerous as you approach Gaza; and the town itself, occupying a slight eminence, has a picturesque and rather imposing appearance.

We arrived about noon at this ancient city of the Philistines, and pitched our tents on a piece of open ground not far from the Pacha's barracks; and, after settling with our camel-drivers, who were now willing to go with us to the end of the world, we went to pay our respects to the governor.

We found the gate of the serai closed, and surrounded by a number of women, some of them talking together in little groups, apparently very much excited, while others were seated on the ground on each side of the gate, with their heads resting on their knees, and one or two were weeping aloud. While we stood looking at these mourners, a small wicket in the large gate was opened, and a young man thrust out into the street. As he looked round, as if in search of some one, the sitting figures started on their feet, and the whole crowd of females rushed forward to meet him. One after another had turned from him with a look of disappointed hope, when a woman from the outermost verge of the crowd pressed forward with an exclamation of joy, and, seizing him by the arm, hurried him away. The

lad was a conscript, who had been rejected as unfit for military service.

On knocking at the gate we were admitted, and found the governor seated in the quadrangle of the building with two or three officers, smoking their pipes, while a party of conscripts were undergoing the examination of a medical officer. Those who were found fit for service were marched to the opposite side of the court, while those who were rejected were thrust out at the wicket as we had seen. The governor, who was a bey, and appeared to be a gentleman-like, well-bred man, apologised that the duty in which he was then engaged obliged him to receive us so unceremoniously, and begged that we would come and drink coffee with him in the morning. There were troops marching to Acre, he said, and no horses could be got; he was afraid there might be some difficulty in getting camels, but he would do all he could for us. He then told us that the quarantine at Jerusalem was at an end.

Just as we returned to our tents, a salute was fired in honour of Mehemet Ali's safe return from Senaar, a courier having come in with the news of his arrival at Cairo. We found our camel-drivers waiting for us, and in great distress. A *suhra*, or impressment of animals for the service of government, was going on, and their camels had

been seized by the soldiers, and they intreated us to intercede for them with the governor. We promised to do so, and seeing Rustum Bey, the commander-in-chief of the district, among the officers at the fort, we addressed ourselves to him, and begged that the men might be allowed to return with their camels to Hebron. They should be sent back immediately, he said; it was a mistake; the soldiers had no right to take any animal that was in our service. We admitted that they were no longer in our service; but as we had brought the men here against their will, we were desirous that they should be allowed to return home, and requested as a favour that he would grant them permission. The permission was accordingly given, and the men departed. Our success in this affair brought us another suppliant in the evening. This was a conscript, who had been servant to an acquaintance of Mr. Pell's in Cairo; and, being found incapable of learning any sort of military duty, had been made cook at the barracks. He had nothing to cook except *khommoos*, and longed to return to the flesh-pots of Egypt; and he now came, he said, to kiss Mr. Pell's feet, and to entreat him to speak to Rustum Bey that he might be sent back to Cairo. He could hardly be persuaded that this was a matter beyond our interference.

The whole of the hill on which Gaza is built has been included in the ancient walls, which may still be traced. There are no antiquities of any importance; but capitals, and fragments of granite and marble pillars, appear in great abundance, forming the lintels of doors, and built into the walls of houses. In one house, we found the roof of the apartment supported by five Corinthian capitals of white marble, placed one above another; and in the interior of the mosque are two rows of columns of grey granite, which have belonged to some Roman temple. The houses are built of stone, and the interior of the town has a clean and comfortable appearance. It contains about 4000 inhabitants, of whom about 500 are Christians. It has been several times destroyed and rebuilt; but appears to have risen to some importance under Hadrian, and received from Constantine the rank and privileges of a city. The suburbs are a collection of poor hovels, but the country around is rich and well cultivated.

Of the Gaza of the Philistines there is no vestige remaining; and it was probably not on the site of the present town, although Baumgarten and some of the early travellers assert that they saw the remains of the temple of Dagon here. "Baldness is come upon Gaza"—"it *is* forsaken."

Two regiments, one of light dragoons, the other

lancers, marched from Gaza on the 22nd for Acre. The men appeared to he healthy, active, young fellows, and were very well mounted. The horses were more compact and useful-looking than many of our light dragoons', and in capital condition. They were armed with the sabre and pistols, and the lance, with its little red-and-white pennon; and, as far as I can pretend to judge, their accoutrements were good, although not so neatly worn as by our soldiers.

The whole scene was highly animating and picturesque. The loud neighing of the horses, the glitter of arms, the trumpets sounding; and the long lances, with their glancing points and gay pennons, appearing here and there among the trees, as they wound through the narrow lanes that divide the gardens, led the thoughts back to the chivalry of older times; and the officers galloping their fine horses to and fro, made one feel impatient of lounging about on foot amid such a spirit-stirring scene.

More painful reflections were awakened, by the groups of women collected on the high bank above the road; mothers and wives, met to take a last parting look, perhaps, of those most dear to them; and hands were raised, and blessings loudly invoked, as each familiar face was recognised in the passing ranks.

We left Gaza early on the 23rd of March; and, as we had only been able to procure five camels, which were barely sufficient to carry our tents and baggage, we started on foot, and in the evening pitched our tents near a small village, which we did not enter.

Next morning, while the rest of the party continued on the direct road to Jaffa, Ismael and I walked to the little town of Migdol, about two miles to the west, to procure, if possible, some additional cattle. The town is under a military governor, who received us very politely, in a clean but rather poor apartment. There were few animals to be got, he said, as most of them had already been taken for the service of the troops, but what there were, he would get for us; and his messenger soon returned with one fine strong camel, and an offer of all the asses in the village. I was then in the English dress; and I have always found that an Englishman has no difficulty in getting whatever he wants in this country, if the people have it to give. We took the camel, and, having selected four good donkeys, rejoined our party.

To the westward of the road to Jaffa, within a short distance of the sea, are the ruins of Askelon. After leaving the cultivated country, and passing among some low sand-hills, you come to a long line of broken wall, part of the defences, probably,

erected during the Crusades, when the strength of its position caused the possession of Askelon to be often warmly contested. The plain of Askelon is famous as the field on which the Saracens were defeated by Godfrey of Bouillon in 1099, and where Richard the First gained a signal victory over Saladin.

The ditch may still be easily traced, although in some places filled up by the drifting sand; and, within it, the ruins of the city cover a fine slope facing the sea. The walls, which are of great strength, are principally constructed with large fragments from Roman buildings, among which are some entire granite pillars; and the mole, of which some portion remains, appears to have been built of the same materials. The city occupies, within the walls, a space of about two miles in circuit; and, as the Pacha of Egypt has caused the sand to be cleared away, with the intention of building a new town and harbour from the ancient materials, many interesting remains have been exposed to view.

Near the centre of the field of ruins there has stood a temple of large dimensions, the pillars of which, although all prostrate, are still entire; each shaft being of one piece of grey granite. The capitals and entablature are of white marble, of the Corinthian order, and in the purest taste.

Near this, a very beautiful colossal female figure, of white marble, forms part of the substructure of a building, and might be easily removed from its present situation. Friezes and entablatures, and fragments of marble statues, lie scattered about in every direction.

One of the most interesting ruins is that of an early Christian church, probably of the fourth or fifth century; the walls, pavement, and bases of the columns showing the exact plan of the building, which corresponds with that of other early churches in the Holy Land. The pavement, and the capitals and bases of the columns, are of polished white marble. The capitals are corrupt in taste, but beautifully carved, as is frequently seen in similar instances, when the arts had begun to decline. They bear an eight-pointed cross, encircled in a wreath of laurel.

Askelon was a bishopric in the early ages of Christianity; but, after the expulsion of the Christians, it ceased to be a place of any importance. Sandys describes it as "a place of no note, except that the Turke doth here keep a garrison." It is now a place of still less note, except that the deserted ruins, and the poor village of shepherds beside the walls, remain as an evidence of the fulfilment of the prophecy, "Askelon shall be a desolation, it shall not be inhabited, and the sea coast

shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks."

A little further north is the ruined village of Toukrair, supposed by some to be on the site of Ekron, another of the five satrapies of the Philistines. There is, however, no sufficient evidence that this is Ekron. It was prophesied "Ekron shall be rooted up," and its name is now unknown in the country.

About ten miles from Jaffa is Shdood, the Ashdod of Scripture. It occupies the summit of a hill, surrounded with rich pasture, in a finely undulated country, partially cultivated, and in other places covered with a luxuriant crop of thistles. It must have been re-built and fortified after its destruction by Uzziah, as it afterwards stood repeated and protracted sieges by the Egyptians and Assyrians, with whom its commanding position gave it great importance as a frontier town. It may again become important in a military point of view.

The appearance of Jaffa is exceedingly picturesque. It is situated on a hill which rises about 150 feet above the sea, and is surrounded by orange groves and gardens, separated by hedges of the prickly-pear. We reached the town about three o'clock, and set up our tents without the walls, in preference to seeking the hospitality of one of the convents.

The town is surrounded by a wall, apparently of no great strength, flanked with towers at intervals. Immediately within the gate there is a gaudy-looking fountain of white marble, ornamented with painting, and with Arabic inscriptions in gold letters. From the inequality of the ground on which the town is built, most of the streets are paved in steps, like those of Valetta; the buildings are very much crowded together, and the interior by no means corresponds with the picturesque appearance of the town from a distance.

Jaffa contains several convents, one of which, the Armenian, has acquired a painful notoriety from having been the hospital where Napoleon is accused of having poisoned his sick soldiers.

There is a considerable manufacture of soap here, from which Damascus and Cairo, and all the principal towns, are supplied; and fruit, particularly oranges and water-melons, are exported in great quantities. The water-melon of Jaffa is celebrated all over the country, and is one of the finest fruits we get in Beyrout.

The harbour is a very bad one. It is narrow, and formed by a ledge of rocks running north and south; there is not more than three fathoms' water in the deepest part; and, when the wind blows strong from the northward, the sea breaks in with great violence. Its former importance could only

have arisen from its being the port of Jerusalem; indeed the only sea-port in Judea. It never could have been a safe or commodious one.

There are no antiquities; and although the house of Simon the tanner may still be pointed out, I did not seek it. There is no place of the kind mentioned in the sacred history, which is not shown to travellers in the modern cities. In Beyrout, and, I think, in all the towns along the coast, the tanners carry on their trade "by the sea side."

The quarantine being over at Jerusalem, my friends determined to proceed thither; but, as the journey from Egypt had occupied more time than I had anticipated, and I was very anxious to reach Beyrout without delay, I most unwillingly made up my mind to part from them here, and to take the route along the coast by Tyre and Sidon.

After our long wandering in the Desert, where all are so dependent on each other for comfort, I felt sad enough at parting with my fellow-travellers; some of whom I shall probably never see again; but who will remain associated, in my mind, with some of the most interesting recollections of my life. Many a happy and joyous hour we spent together, in spite of all the privations and discomforts of a Desert journey.

On the 26th of March I left Jaffa in the morning with Salem, my Arab servant, the Surrugee,

and his three rather indifferent horses; and after a lonely and silent ride of four hours along the beach, I turned from the sea-side, and came suddenly upon the two regiments of cavalry that had left Gaza the day before our departure.

They were encamped in a wide hollow, on the meadows on each side of a rapid stream, which was running from bank to brae, dancing and foaming along on its way to the sea. The horses were picketed to iron pegs driven into the ground, and covered the whole pasture, the tether of each being just of sufficient length to prevent his fighting with his neighbours. To reach the ford by which we crossed the stream, we had to ride through the midst of the encampment; and as the dragoon horses seemed inclined to resent the intrusion of my sorry jades into their pasture, I had enough to do to fight my way through them. I had no sooner driven off one brute that ran at me open-mouthed, by a smart rap over the nose, than I had another at my side, rearing up, and sparring with his fore-feet; and scarcely had I got beyond his reach, when I was threatened with two or three pair of heels at once. I had too constant employment for my eyes, while running the gauntlet in this way, to look how Salem and the Surrugee were faring behind me; but on extricating

ourselves from the crowd, I found that they had come off scatheless, although one of my portmanteaus had suffered a severe fracture.

It was just four o'clock when I reached the khan, which is the usual termination of the first day's journey from Jaffa; but with two hours of daylight before me, and a fine moon, I felt no inclination to stop at this wretched place, with no better society than my own thoughts, for which I found more entertainment on the road. I determined to ride on, and take my chance of finding quarters at some of the villages before me; and I cut short the loud remonstrance of the surrugee by riding on, and telling Salem to bring him along.

I again struck down to the sea-side, that I might enjoy the cool breeze and the glorious sunset; and about five o'clock came to a beautiful bank sloping down to the beach, covered with rich green sward, and sprinkled with anemones, and sheltered by a thicket of myrtle. There I dismounted, and sat down to watch the setting sun; while Salem spread the carpet, and set out the provisions he had brought, and lighted a fire to boil the coffee. I rested here till the sun was quite set, and the moon shining in full splendour, for in this country there is scarcely any interval of twilight.

No pale gradations quench his ray,
No twilight dews his wrath allay;
With disk like battle-target red,
He rushes to his burning bed,
Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
Then sinks at once—and all is night.

We had scarcely left this spot, and were proceeding along the shore, when the surrugee rode up to me, and "begged to represent" that we ought to return to the regular road. Now it appeared to me, that, in a country where there were no proper roads, it mattered very little whether we kept to a beaten track or not, so we continued in the right direction; and besides I wanted to see the ruins of Cesarea, which lie close to the sea, by moonlight. But the surrugee had been filling Salem's head with terrible stories of deserters, who were prowling about everywhere, and of the danger of travelling by night; and at the mention of *Kaiserieh*, they both held up their hands in amazement. "What did I want there? —what could I want there? There was nothing but old walls," they said, "no houses, no people —it was a bad place." At Salem's earnest entreaty, I loaded and pocketed my pistols, and buckled on my sabre, since he saw that I was resolved to go on; and we were scarcely again in motion when he called out, in a great fright, "Ah, what is that?—see, it comes!" and sure

enough I did see a dark object approaching under the shadow of the high bank. It was neither an Egyptian deserter, nor a bear, nor an hyena, all which agreeable ideas had arisen, one after another, in Salem's mind. It was so busy poking up the sand with its nose that it did not appear to notice us till it came within eight or ten yards, when it trotted out into the moonlight, a large wild-boar. "Well," thought I, "if there is any danger, I have got a pretty couple of courageous followers!"

About ten o'clock we reached Cesarea, once the capital of Palestine, but now a heap of ruins, and utterly deserted. The moon threw a bright but ghastly light over the old grey walls and towers; and the only sounds we heard were the hooting of the owl among the ruins, and the sullen, measured roar of the waves breaking among the rocks below.

On the land side, a wide moat and an old wall still inclose the ruins, which appear to cover a considerable extent of ground; and on the north-eastern side there are ruins of an aqueduct with high arches. Immense blocks rising above the waves, at some distance from the shore, appear to be the remains of a semicircular mole, beginning at the south side and winding round to the west.

The building of Cesarea was celebrated by a

magnificent festival every fifth year; and it was on one of these "set days" that Herod Agrippa, the grandson of the founder, was "smitten by the angel of the Lord," and died, as recorded in Acts xii. 23. Here, Cornelius and his kinsmen were converted and became "the first-fruits of the Gentiles;" and here Paul delivered his eloquent defence against the Jews and their orator Tertullus. The surrender of Cesarea concluded the conquests of the victorious Khaled in Syria. It fell in the year 639, and was followed by the surrender of all the other cities, which as yet held out, to the Saracen yoke*. It is frequently mentioned, as a place of some note, in the history of the crusades; but, after the expulsion of the Christians, it rapidly declined, and has long remained silent and tenantless, as now. "The defenced city is desolate; and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness."

The night was beautiful, but bitterly cold; and my two companions grumbled a little at my lingering so long about the ruins. They were proceeding at a slow pace, and forty or fifty yards a-head of me, when they were stopped by two men; and, on riding up, I found them in conversation with two as ruffianly-looking fellows as one would like to meet with in such a place, and at such an

* Ockley.

hour: Egyptians both of them, and like enough to be deserters. Salem whispered to me that he knew them, by their faces, to be from Damietta. They said that a river, a little way on, was so swollen by the rain that we could not pass it; but that if we would follow them, pointing to the sand-hills above the ruins, they would show us a ford. Their tone and manner were not calculated to inspire much confidence, any more than their personal appearance; and, my guide declaring his perfect knowledge of a ford before us, I told him to ride on. On reaching the stream, we found it in heavy flood; and, after several attempts to cross, were obliged to give it up, as the horses sunk up to the knees in the soft wet sand at the very edge of the water. We had proceeded four or five hundred yards up the stream, in search of a ford, when I observed an old boat fastened to the bank; and was just telling Salem to go and see if it could carry one of the horses, when the two Egyptians suddenly reappeared. They both ran for the boat, into which one of them jumped, while the other waited to meet us. The fellow, when we came up, proposed that he and his companion should take me and the luggage across in the boat; and that Salem and the surrugee might take the horses over by a ford, which, he said, was a little higher up. Well, thought I, if there is a ford, we may all cross

at it, so this is a most barefaced attempt at reducing the odds, which, at present, are in my favour. I was completely covered by a large Greek capote, which concealed my arms, and which I took off and flung across my horse. "Now, Salem," said I, "tell him that if one of them will take you and me across in the boat, with the luggage, and the other show the surrugee the ford, I'll give them ten piastres." "Well, what does he say?" "No signore, non vuole." "Then tell him this. We are three, and well armed; if they will agree to my proposal, well —if not, we'll take the boat from them—tell him to throw down that stick." At the sight of the pistols the fellow stepped back two or three paces; but when he saw my capote tossed into the boat, and a portmanteau about to follow it, he beckoned to the surrugee, and walked off without saying a word. We had scarcely pushed into the stream, when we saw them cross at a ford, not above knee deep, nor more than twenty yards above us. The whole affair did not occupy ten minutes, and the fellow in the boat, who was a lad of eighteen or nineteen, never opened his mouth.

It was past twelve o'clock when we reached Tortura, the ancient Dora, a poor village close to the sea. There was no khan in the place, and I never doubted being received into one or other of the houses; but I soon found that I was reckoning

without my host. I knocked at half-a-dozen inhospitable doors; some of them were not even opened, and the others were slammed in our faces the moment the inmates caught a sight of my unlucky *tarboosh*, which, having no hat, I was still obliged to wear. At last, by good fortune we found our way to the house of the Sheich el Bellad; but he, like a cautious man, instead of opening his door, came out on the roof to hold a parley with us. I was in the English dress, to be sure, but the red tarboosh was enough to convince him that I was not *Inglez*, and he positively refused to open his door; but, pointing to a large court, full of sheep and goats, said we would find a place to sleep in there.

After looking into one or two out-houses that stood open, I fixed on one that had a dry floor, and a door that could be shut; a fire was soon lighted outside the door; and, after a cup of coffee and a pipe, two great comforts on such occasions, I wrapped myself in my capote, and slept pretty well in spite of the fleas, which were rather abundant.

At day-break, I was again in the saddle, and about noon passed the promontory of Cape Carmel, and crossing "the ancient river, the river Kishon," rode into Caipha, a small fortified town on the southern side of the bay of Acre. There were

three Egyptian ships of war here, for the anchorage on this side of the bay is safer than at Acre.

Mount Carmel is the termination of a range of hills traversing Judea from north to south, and descends abruptly near the sea. Buckingham calls it 1500 feet in height, but it appeared to me considerably less, and Sandys describes it as "of indifferent altitude." On the north-eastern side, there are still some olive grounds and vineyards, on the plain; and the sides of the mountain clothed with bushes and wild vines bespeak the natural fertility of the soil, although "the excellency of Carmel" is no more.

The river Kishon, called *Nahr el Makattam*, flows along the eastern base of the mountain; and on this side it must have been that the people were assembled when Ahab "gathered all Israel unto Mount Carmel," and when "the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice," which Elijah had prepared. The locality was admirably chosen for the display of this wonderful spectacle; for to the people assembled on the extensive plain of Esdraelon, and even on the hills of Samaria and Gilboa, the miracle must have been distinctly visible.

Other spots are pointed out as associated with events in the life of Elijah, which rest their claim to the reverence of pilgrims, on no better evi-

dence than the authority of some monkish tradition.

I would fain have got fresh horses at Caipha, as those which I had brought were rather fagged ; but the English consular agent was absent, and his wife, a Levantine, either could not or would not do anything to assist me. She was most distressingly polite in her offers of ice and lemonade, but to any inquiry about horses would only answer in her abominable patois, that "Il Consul andar a Acra, e non saper quando ritornar." It was only about five miles, however; and I walked down to the gate, desiring Salem to follow me with the horses. At the gate I was stopped by the guard, and, as my firman was in one of the portmanteaus, I had to amuse myself, till the horses came down, looking at the muskets in the guard-house, which were all French or English ; some of them marked "Tower London."

I reached Acre at five o'clock, after rather a pleasant walk round the bay, and was again stopped by the soldiers on guard at the gate, under pretence that I must perform quarantine before entering the town ; but on producing my firman, they withdrew without saying a word ; the whole, I suppose, being an attempt to extort a little *baksheesh*.

I went directly to the Latin Convent, where I

met with rather a churlish reception from a crabbed-looking old monk, who first of all ascertained that I was an Englishman, and then told me that the convent was not a locanda for every traveller that chose to enter. I pretended not to notice the old man's rudeness; but by a judicious use of Sam Slick's two specifics, *human natur* and *soft sawder*, to one who appeared more rosy about the gills, I was at last installed in a small cell with an iron bedstead and a good bed on it. A dish of boiled rice and a few olives, which was all that the convent afforded, was rather too light a repast after a long ride, and I was obliged to send to the bazaar for some meat.

I was a little surprised at the incivility with which I was, at first, received; but I have since learned that the English do not always meet with the same hospitality at these convents which they invariably met with some years ago. This is owing, it is said, to the influence which the Protestant missionaries are gaining among the native Christian population, and the jealousy felt by the priests of the missionary enterprise of England.

I was rather annoyed at being kept here all the next day by the difficulty of obtaining horses. The town was full of soldiers, and two or three regiments were encamped before the walls.

There is not much to be seen in Acre. The

houses are well and strongly built of stone, with flat terraced roofs, and the town has a comfortable and rather cheerful appearance.

The cathedral church of St. Andrew, near the sea, and the church of St. John, erected by the knights of Malta, are the only remains of the Christian possessors; and, among the modern buildings there is a beautiful mosque, and a fountain, near the serai, both built by the infamous Djezzar Pacha, with ancient materials brought from Cesarea.

On the west and south the walls are washed by the Mediterranean, and on the north and east sides the town is encompassed by an extensive and fertile plain. About a quarter of a mile from the walls on the east of the town, stands the Mount of Richard Cœur de Lion, from which Napoleon directed the assault, when Acre was so gallantly defended by Sir Sydney Smith.

After many sieges, which placed it alternately in the hands of the Christians and Saracens, Acre was taken by the latter about the end of the thirteenth century, and held by them until it was ceded to the Turks in 1517. From this time it gradually fell into decay; and Maundrell, who visited it in 1696, represents it as being, with the exception of the residences of the French factors, and the mosque, a vast scene of ruins. About the

middle of last century it was taken by surprise by the Sheich Daher, under whom it recovered part of its former trade; and the fortifications were extended, and the town rebuilt and embellished, by Djezzar Pacha, who succeeded him.

In 1832 it again suffered a siege of eight months, and was taken by Ibrahim Pacha. The effects of this last attack are still visible in many parts of the town, and especially in the convent where I staid, of which only a part is now habitable.

On the 29th I left Acre, and about noon crossed the promontory of Ras el Abiad, "the White Cape," by a steep narrow road cut in the calcareous rock of which the mountain is formed. It is evidently a very ancient road, worn by long use into a curve, and so slippery that the horses could with difficulty keep their footing, except in the very centre of the path. I was, therefore, rather in a dilemma when, at the summit of the ascent, I was met by a party of pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. There was barely room for two horses to pass at the place where we met; huge masses had fallen away from the rock, close to the road; and there was only a low wall of loose stones to protect one from a drop of two or three hundred feet into the sea. Not liking my situation much, I dismounted, and clambered to the top of a rock, leaving the surrugee to fight his own battle for

the passage, which, after a prodigious deal of noise, sliding and stumbling of horses, and shouting of "Yallah! yallah!" was safely effected. The ruts made by wheeled carriages are still visible on some parts of this road.

At five o'clock I arrived at Tsur, the insular Tyre, where I was most kindly and hospitably entertained by the English consular agent, an Arab of the Greek church. As there is no trade at Tsur, I believe these consular agents, who receive no salary, are appointed principally for the convenience of travellers. It is an office eagerly sought after by the Arabs, as it places them under British protection, and exempts them, their families, and servants, from the conscription. My host occupied a very comfortable, well-furnished house, and appeared to be rather a superior sort of person.

One cannot but be struck by the singular accuracy with which the destruction of this city, the insular Tyre, was foretold in the prophecies regarding it. After several unsuccessful attempts to take it by sea, Alexander the Great accomplished its capture, by filling up the channel, which divided it from the continent, with immense blocks of stone, taken from the ruins of the ancient city, and covering the whole with sand*. So completely

* They shall lay thy stones, and thy dust, and thy timber, in the midst of the sea.—Zechariah, ix. 4.

has this artificial mound become consolidated, and extended by the sand washed up on either side, that no one unacquainted with its history would imagine that it had ever been disconnected from the land. It remained long in the same state in which it was left, after its destruction by the Memlooks about the end of the thirteenth century; but, within the last ten or fifteen years, a good many new, substantial stone houses have been built on the north side of the peninsula.

The harbour is a small circular basin, choked up with sand, and encumbered with ruins; and affords shelter only to a few fishing-boats.

Benjamin of Tudela, who visited Tyre in the twelfth century, describes it as in a tolerably flourishing condition. "One day's journey from Sydon is New Tyrus, furnished with a most commodious haven, which it containeth within itself, and receiveth ships between two towers built on both sides; so that a brazen chain being extended from one tower to the other by the publicans, serving for the gathering of customs, all entrance and going out of ships by night may be hindered, and no man can possibly convey anything taken out of the ships. Nor do I think any haven in the world to be found like unto this. The city itself, as I have said, is goodly, and in it there are about 400 Jews, some of whom are very skilful in

disciplinary readings, and especially Ephraim the Egyptian judge, and Mair, and Carchasonæ, and Abraham the head of the college. Some of the Jews living there have ships at the sea for gain. There are workmen in glass there, who make glass called Tyrian glass; the most excellent, and of the greatest estimation in all countries. The best and most approved sugar is also found there."

There are now neither harbour nor college; publicans "gathering of customs," nor Jews "skilful in disciplinary readings;" workmen in glass, nor importers of sugars. It is "a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea."

Of the ancient, or continental, Tyre, scarcely any vestige is to be seen. The remains of an aqueduct, supported on arches, is the only ruin that strikes the eye; and the heaps of architectural remains, which at one time covered a vast extent of ground, are now buried beneath the sand, which has gradually accumulated over them. "This once famous Tyrus," as Sandys says, "is now no other than an heape of ruines; yet they have a reverent aspect, and doe instruct the pensive beholder with their exemplary frailty."

After coffee and a pipe with my kind host, I started from Tyre, on the morning of the 30th of March, and in about two hours came to the Nahr el Kasmai, which was so much swollen by the recent

rains that I had some difficulty in getting across. The Kasmia has its source near Baalbec, and formed the boundary between the territory of the Tyrians and the possessions of the Sidonians on the north.

About an hour from the Kasmia is Ras Sarfa, "Sarepta," where the remains of a considerable town are to be seen, but no ruins of any importance.

A little beyond this is a place called El Borek, where there is a fine fountain of beautiful clear water, shaded by trees, where I alighted, and had coffee brought from a khan in the neighbourhood. From this fountain an aqueduct conveys the water to Sidon.

Ancient remains are numerous along the whole line of coast. The traveller is continually passing over fragments of tesselated pavement; while prostrate columns, and remains of masonry, and occasionally a single pillar rising amidst the confused heap of ruins which crown some picturesque height at a little distance from his path, indicate the former wealth and populousness of the country.

I reached Sidon about four o'clock. The distance from Tsur is, I should think, about twenty-five miles; but, from the absence of any regularly made road, the roughness of the rocky ground in

many places, and the swollen state of every little stream at this season, it is a journey of eight or nine hours.

The ancient city of Sidon extended along the coast to the eastward of the modern town, which stands on an eminence overhanging the sea. Upon the elevated ground on the south side of the town are the ruins of a large castle, built by Louis the Ninth of France, who repaired the injuries which the city had suffered during the holy wars; and on the north there is a fortress in the sea, erected for the defence of the port, and connected with the land by a long bridge.

The harbour, however, is now incapable of receiving vessels of any great draught of water. It was designedly filled up with sand and fragments of granite, from the ancient remains, by the Emir Fakeer ed Deen, in the sixteenth century, in order to prevent the Turkish galleys from finding shelter. Vessels now anchor at a short distance from the shore.

The streets in the higher part of the town are many of them arched over, dark and gloomy, but those below are more cheerful; the bazaars seemed to be pretty well stocked; and there was a considerable appearance of bustle and activity. The soil around Tsaida is favourable to the growth of the mulberry, and the people are principally em-

ployed in the silk trade, which during the last century was extensively carried on by a French factory. The French were expelled by Djezzar Pacha on the breaking out of the French Revolution.

Tsaida is now the residence of Sulyman Pacha, (Colonel Selves,) a French officer of high rank in the service of Mehemet Ali, and governor of this city.

As I was very impatient to reach Beyrout, I determined to continue my journey; and, after waiting two hours to rest and feed the horses, we started about seven o'clock in the evening. I knew that the rivers were all much swollen, but the surrugee assured me that he knew every ford, and that they were all passable.

Across the bay we fared very smoothly, although the night was cloudy and dark; but we soon got so bewildered among the rocks after leaving the beach, that, after scrambling and stumbling about in the dark for an hour, we were obliged to pull up at a khan, and wait till the moon rose.

Even then we got on but slowly. The way was rocky and difficult, and the night bitterly cold; and about midnight, my guide, who had readily undertaken this night journey on the promise of a little additional *baksheesh*, began to grumble and complain of fatigue, and even to hint at the neces-

sity of looking out for a convenient spot to sleep on. On our arrival at the Nahr el Kahdi, the ancient Tamyras, which was certainly foaming along in rather an angry mood, he fairly pulled up, and declared that he would not move a step farther till daylight. He could not find the ford by moonlight, he said, and he did not want to be drowned.

The moonlight was as bright as day, and there could be no difficulty in finding the ford, if there was one; and, as I had no wish to get a fit of ague, the sure consequence of sleeping among the damp bushes by the river side, I endeavoured to urge on my unwilling guide. I threatened to mulct him of all *baksheesh*; he didn't care, money was of no use to a man after he was drowned. I threatened him with a good drubbing, and applied the *koorbadj* across his shoulders; he would rather be beaten, he said, than drowned; and there he sat on the bank, with his feet crooked under him, the very picture of determined obduracy.

Salem showed more courage here than at Cesarea, although here, I think, the danger was greater. He was as unwilling as I was to sleep on the damp ground, and determined to try the ford himself, which, as he was a very expert swimmer, I did not object to. He accordingly undressed, and walked very deliberately into the river, which was running with great force, and although the water reached

nearly to his arms, he gained the opposite bank, and returned in safety.

We crossed safely, but it was, after all, rather a hazardous experiment; for the horse's side presenting a greater surface to the stream, rendered the riding more unsafe than the wading through; and my sensations were not very agreeable when I felt the cold water rushing over my knees.

We had now been nearly fifteen hours on horseback, and my two followers began to get a little fagged. On looking round, I saw them straggling along, about ten yards from each other, at a very slow pace, and both nodding in their saddles. Salem, when I roused him, awoke with such a start that he lost his balance, and fairly dropped off his horse; and I was obliged to drive them before me, and waken them up every minute. In an hour further, however, I found myself dropping into an involuntary nap; and as we passed a wretched little khan, before which some muleteers were seated by a fire, I pulled up; and having warmed ourselves, and drunk some coffee, we again mounted, and reached Beyrout about nine o'clock on the morning of the 31st March.

The last hour or two before reaching Beyrout were as weary and toilsome as can well be imagined at the end of a long journey—a wide plain of loose sand, into which the tired horses sunk over the fetlocks at every step.

LETTER V.

Uneasiness from apprehensions of war—Early history of Beyrout—Description of the modern town—The Druses—Anzaris—Metawalis, &c.

Beyrout, May 5, 1839.

MY DEAR ——,

AFTER the wandering life I had led for two months before my arrival, I felt even this place to be a sort of home, although wanting so many of the associations which make home what it is. You would like Beyrout, for a little while at least; the situation is very picturesque, the climate delightful, and the surrounding scenery as beautiful as it would be novel to you.

In the meantime business is almost entirely stopped here, in consequence of the rumour of war between the Sultan and the Pacha of Egypt. Several regiments have passed through Beyrout lately; the soldiers quartered here, and regiments stationed at Damascus and Baalbec, have marched to Aleppo; and Ibrahim is said to be concentrating all his forces on the northern frontier, in expectation of an attack from that quarter.

The Metawalis and the Bedaween tribes around Damascus take advantage of the removal of the troops, to attack and plunder the villages and smaller towns in their neighbourhood; travelling is no longer safe; and many of the Christian inhabitants of Damascus, apprehensive of a rising among the fanatic Mooslims, have come to Beyrout for safety. About ten days ago a large body of Bedaweens rode into Damascus, and plundered the quarter called the *Maidân*, carrying off a number of camels and other booty; and a few days after the Metawalis made a similar raid on Tripoli, one day's journey from this, and plundered the merchants' stores.

We are under no apprehension of being visited here by these predatory clans, as the Druses and Maronites of Mount Lebanon are between us and the disturbed districts; and the guns upon the batteries, and a gun-brig in the roads, are sufficient protection against these irregular attacks.

We hear that the Turkish army has crossed the frontier, and taken possession of Aintab; and that Ibrahim has marched from Aleppo with his whole force; and a battle is expected. Ibrahim has hitherto been a successful general—a great point in itself; and his army is said to be better officered, and under better discipline, than the Sultan's. Mr. —— left this last week for Scanderoon, and

will despatch a courier when anything important occurs.

In the mean time I have more time than enough to see all that is worthy of notice in and around this place. There are no antiquities of any great importance, nor are such to be expected in a place which has so frequently suffered from the ravages of war, and from earthquakes.

The name Berytus is said to be derived from Baal-Berith, a Phenician deity, to whom there was a temple here. The city was entirely destroyed, 140 B.C., by Diodotus Tryphon; but was rebuilt, nearly on the ancient site, after the conquest of Syria, by the Romans; and became a Roman colony under Augustus, who called it after his daughter, Colonia Felix Julia.

Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, adorned the city with magnificent baths and a theatre, some faint traces of which may still be seen on the north of the town; and Alexander Severus founded the school for the study of law, which became so celebrated in the age of Justinian, that the emperor called Berytus, "the mother and nurse of the law."

It was taken by Baldwin in 1111, and retaken by Saladin before the end of the same century; and fell at different times into the hands of either party during the wars of the Cross.

It now presents few traces of its ancient greatness beyond the fragments of granite pillars used in the construction of the quay facing the harbour, and portions of tesselated pavement and shafts of columns found in the gardens, and along the seashore; remains of little value in the eyes of an antiquary, but which may, as old Sandys has it, "instruct the pensive beholder with their exemplary frailtie."

The modern town is enclosed by a wall, and has five gates, which are closed after sunset; and no one is allowed to appear in the streets after dark without a lantern. The streets are narrow and irregular, dark and gloomy where there are no shops, and nowhere very cheerful-looking, except on the *marina* facing the sea. There are several mosques, the largest of which was a Christian church, dedicated to St. John.

Beyrout, including the suburbs, contains about 15,000 inhabitants, of whom at least two-thirds are Christians; and, as they are exempt from the conscription, the population has not decreased as in those towns the population of which are nearly all Mooslims.

Being the port of Damascus, and indeed the only port between Alexandria and the Gulf of Scanderoon, the trade of Beyrout has increased very considerably within the last ten or twelve

years; and improvements are now in progress that are rarely seen in any of the other towns in this country. Old houses have been pulled down, and new and more commodious dwellings erected in their place; streets have been widened by the removal of old buildings; a considerable portion of the town has been paved; and dwelling-houses and stores have been built on speculation, and are quickly finding occupiers.

The harbour has two picturesque old towers at the entrance; one of them on an isolated rock, and connected with the shore by a causeway on three unequal arches. But the harbour is a bad one, and the ships frequenting the port anchor in the bay, about a mile from the shore.

The Christian inhabitants, with the exception of a few who belong to the Greek Church, are either Maronites, or of some other sect in connexion with the Church of Rome. The villages in the mountains are principally inhabited by the Maronites and Druses. The former, although under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Pope, retain certain peculiarities in their ecclesiastical laws and religious ceremonies which distinguish them from the Church of Rome. Their Patriarch is elected by the priests and people, according to an ancient custom, but is confirmed in his office by a bull from the Pope. The priests say mass together,

standing round the altar; they use unleavened bread in the communion, and the laity partake in both kinds.

The Druses inhabit great part of the range of Libanus, and are found all along the coast from Sidon to Djibail. Their origin is involved in great obscurity, and little appears to be known of their religious belief or practices, except that they occasionally assume, for a time, any religion that may suit their interest. They are neither Christian nor Mooslim; but, when it suits their own views, they assume a fashion of Mahommedism,—frequent the mosques, and perform the ablutions and prayers; and, at present, many of them affect to be Christians, and some have even attended the preaching of the Protestant missionaries.

In their own religion they have neither festivals nor fasts, nor, indeed, any public service to which the whole body of their people are admitted. They have small chapels, or oratories, in secluded parts of the mountains; but the ceremonies performed there are shrouded in mystery, and concealed from the uninitiated even of their own sect. According to some, they sacrifice before an idol, in the form of an ox; but the more general belief is, that they worship their founder Hakim Be-Amrou, the third Khaleef of Egypt, whom they believe to have been an incarnation of the Deity. They are

divided into two classes, the Khakel and Djahel, the initiated and uninitiated. The former are the sacred order, and are distinguished by a white turban folded in a peculiar manner, and they only are acquainted with the mysteries of their religion, or are admitted to their secret meetings; but any Djahel may enter this order, and it is consequently pretty numerous. They believe in the transmigration of souls, eat pork, and drink wine.

The domestic habits of the Druses resemble those of the other mountaineers, and they are noted for their hospitality to strangers. Their women, as well as those of the Maronites, wear the singular ornament called *tantour;* a conical silver tube, about eighteen inches long, projecting from the forehead like the horn of the unicorn. It is worn only by the married women, and is by no means a becoming part of their dress, which is otherwise easy and graceful.

From the best information I could obtain, founded on the returns for the *firde**, the Druse population is about 70,000, and the Maronites not less than 220,000. They are united under the jurisdiction of the Emir Besheer, who is a staunch and powerful adherent of Mehemet Ali. They were disarmed some years ago by the Pacha;

* The new tax imposed by Mehemet Ali—it is levied on all the males above the age of fifteen.

but, in the present juncture, arms have been distributed among them, for the preservation of tranquillity in the country, during the absence of the regular troops.

Further to the north, in the district called the Kesrawan, are found the *Anzaris*, a race whose origin appears to be more enveloped in mystery than even that of the Druses. Burckhardt says, "they are divided into three sects, of which nothing is known except the names, viz., *Kelbyeh*, *Shemsyeh*, and *Mokladjyeh*." These names, however, afford some foundation for the belief which generally prevails in the country, that the Kelbyeh * worship the dog, and the Shemsyeh † the sun.

The Metawalis, whose principal station is at Baalbec, but who inhabit a considerable portion of the range of Anti-Libanus, are supposed to be descended from the ancient Syrians; although, as a distinct sect, they were not known earlier than the beginning of the eighteenth century. They are of the Shi-ite sect, the dominant one in Persia, and are hated equally by the Christians and the Sonnites, or orthodox Mahommedans. They are a turbulent, lawless race, and, at the present moment, infest the roads between this place and

* From the Arabic word *Kelb*, "a dog."

† *Shems*, "the sun."

Damascus; and are said to be collected in considerable force between Baalbec and Zebdani, under the Emir Shooeb, one of their chiefs.

The disturbed state of the country towards Damascus has prevented me from visiting that city. We expect every day to hear of a battle having been fought, or of some peaceable adjustment of the differences between Mehemet Ali and the Porte, and are kept in a state of excitement and suspense which is not very agreeable. Various are the wishes, and hopes, and fears, which I hear expressed regarding the probable result of the present crisis; but, on the whole, I think the inhabitants of Beyrout are favourable to Mehemet Ali. More than two-thirds of them are Christians, and therefore do not suffer from the conscription; which the Mooslim population complain of, and justly, far more than all the other obnoxious measures of the government. Indeed, I have heard it repeatedly said, "Let us have four or five years without the conscription—that is all we want."

LETTER VI.

Environs of Beyrout—French entomologist—Nahr el Kelb—Nahr el Leban—El Melaha—Antique remains, &c.

Beyrout, June 1839.

THE heat is considerably greater than last month, but not so oppressive as to prevent my taking a pretty long walk almost every day; and I have once or twice been out quail-shooting.

A favourite ramble of mine is along the shore, three or four miles to the west of the town, where the land rises abruptly, and terminates in a precipice about two hundred feet in height. The sea washes the base of the cliff; and, some fifty yards from the land, an immense rock rises above the waves, perforated by a natural cavern about thirty feet high, and affording shelter to thousands of blue pigeons.

You are here out of sight of the town, and the solitude is perfect; and you can imagine no music more grand and impressive than the rushing of the waters round the rocky island, and among the deep caverns under the cliff. Beautiful flowers spring

up on every side, and beautiful insects are sporting away their short lives in the sunshine. The only noxious animal I have met with is a Frenchman, whom I saw one day, "with spectacle on nose," peeping and poking about the rocks and bushes. By and by, he made a dart at something, and having caught it, seemed to examine it very minutely, and consign it, with great care, to a long pasteboard box, which was carried by a servant who followed him. He had been very successful to-day, he said, opening his box, and displaying a most sickening array of the beautiful creatures that I had taken such delight in watching as they fluttered from flower to flower, or darted about among the sand and stones, now struggling in helpless agony, with pins through their backs. In another box he had a small cameleon, shut up with a large piece of camphor, to suffocate it, that it might be killed without injury to its appearance. The poor creature looked up so imploringly, with its little intelligent-looking eyes, that I felt quite grieved for it, and half inclined to intercede for its life, at the risk of being refused, and laughed at into the bargain.

I rode, a day or two ago, to Nahr el Kelb, the ancient Lycus, to see some curious sculptures and inscriptions on the rocks, which belong to a very remote period.

I left Beyrout in the morning, and proceeding round the eastern side of the bay, crossed the Nahr el Leban—"river of milk"—by a Roman bridge of six arches. From thence the road continues among mulberry gardens to the eastern point of the plain of Beyrout, and then a pleasant ride along the sandy beach brings you to the foot of the promontory called Ras Nahr el Kelb. Close to the sea are several spacious, shallow tanks, hewn in the rocks, which have been used for obtaining salt, by evaporating the sea-water. The place is called El Melaha, from the Arabic word *melh*, "salt."

The promontory stretches into the sea, and rises to a considerable height. It is crossed by a road, about six or eight feet in width, cut in the rock, and covered with a causeway of large stones, in shallow steps; which, in its present rugged and broken state, forms rather a precarious path for horses.

About half-way across the promontory there is a square tablet, cut in the face of the rock, containing a Latin inscription, from which it appears that the road was made by the Emperor Antoninus; and at an elevation considerably higher, are seen several sculptured figures and inscriptions, evidently of great antiquity, and of different periods; some of them being Egyptian hiero-

glyphics, and the others containing inscriptions in the cuneiform, or arrow-headed character. The most remarkable of these tablets contains the full-length figure of a man, nearly the size of life, with a pointed beard, and habited in a tunic and high Phrygian cap,—on the whole not unlike the dress of the modern Persians. The figure is seen in profile: one hand is raised before the face, and appears to have held some object, which is now effaced; and the other is placed on the breast. In the left corner of the tablet, above the figure, a globe and crescent, and other symbols, may be traced; and the whole surface below the waist of the figure is covered with the arrow-headed characters. Some of the hieroglyphics are cut on the rock, without any border; but, in one instance, they are enclosed in a sort of frame, upon which appear several cartouches, similar to those at Thebes.

These sculptures are supposed to commemorate certain events in Egyptian, Assyrian, or Phrygian history. The Egyptian hieroglyphics are attributed to Sesostris, that is, Rameses the Second, who sailed from the bay of Djunia, at the mouth of the Lycus, with the fleet which accompanied him to Kittim, the modern Cyprus; an event which these inscriptions are supposed to commemorate*. The basso-rilievo which I have described

* Landseer, Sabean Researches.

is attributed to one of the then Assyrian monarchs, Pul, Pull Assur, and Sulman Assur, the immediate predecessors of Nebuchadnezzar, who invaded and exacted tribute from Phenicia.

Near the northern extremity of the road stands a mass of rock hewn into the form of a pedestal, which the natives imagine supported the figure of a dog, from which the river took its name; and they point to a large black rock, nearly covered by the sea, as this canine statue, which had fallen from its place on the cliff above. It is not improbable that the pedestal may have supported a statue of the Emperor Antoninus.

Descending the northern side of the promontory, we came to the Nahr el Kelb, issuing from a rocky valley, and crossed at a short distance from the sea by a well-built stone bridge. We left our horses at a khan near the bridge, and walked some distance up the river. It is a fine, rapid, brawling stream, and reminded me of some of our Highland rivers. After rambling some way into the mountains, we came to a pretty large stream, rushing from a deep cavern in the mountain side, and joining the Nahr el Kelb. It was too deep to be crossed on foot, and the lengthening shadows warned us to return to our horses and gallop round the bay before the gates were shut.

LETTER VII.

Battle of Nezib—Rejoicings after the victory—Illuminations, and female curiosity—Sir Moses Montefiore—The Jews resident in Palestine—Future prospects of the race—Good government of the Pacha.

Beyrout, July 1, 1839.

A TATAR has just arrived with letters from Aleppo. After the occupation of Aintab by the Turkish troops under Solyman Pacha of Marash, the Egyptian army advanced from their encampment by the river Sedjour, on a village occupied by the cavalry of the Sultan's advanced guard. After a short engagement the Turks retreated to Nezib, where the main body of the army were concentrated, under the Seraskier, Hafiz Ali Pacha; leaving their tents, flags, and 50,000 piastres in specie, in the hands of the Egyptians. On the 21st, the Egyptians, advancing towards Nezib, encountered another body of Turkish troops, who, after some skirmishing, also retired on the main army. Since that until the 26th, no official intelligence had reached Aleppo.

On the 26th June, Ismael Bey, the governor of Aleppo, received a despatch from Ibrahim Pacha,

dated the 24th, with intelligence of the total defeat of the Sultan's army. The battle, which commenced at five A.M., only lasted two hours, and only the cavalry and artillery on either side were engaged. Hafiz Ali fled with a few troops in the direction of Roumkali; but the remainder and greater part of his forces either deserted or were taken prisoners. Several Turkish officers fell, and many of the Europeans attached to the army, in the capacity of instructors, were shot by their own men at the beginning of the attack. The whole camp, baggage, ammunition, stores, and 120 pieces of artillery, fell into the hands of the Egyptian army; and the deserters, who were coming into Aleppo in great numbers, and taking service under Ibrahim Pacha, report that upwards of 25,000 were either taken prisoners, or deserted at the beginning of the battle.

The superior discipline of the Egyptian army, and the high opinion entertained of Ibrahim's talents as a general, had prepared most people here to expect that the result of a battle must be unfavourable to the Sultan; but it does seem somewhat strange that the Turks, who fought well at the battle of Koniah in 1833, should have behaved so shamefully on this occasion. No doubt appears to be entertained of the fact that they killed several of their own officers; and that one

or two entire regiments went over to the Egyptians, without firing a shot. These regiments have been sent forward to Aleppo, and are to be enrolled in the service of the Egyptian government. It does look as if the battle had been decided by something more than military skill.

This victory has had the effect of restoring confidence here, and it is hoped that the relations between Mehemet Ali and the Porte will now be established on some permanent basis. It causes great rejoicing among the Christian population, who dreaded the return of the Turkish government, and the renewal of all the oppression they used formerly to suffer under the Osmanlies.

The victory is to be celebrated by three days of jubilee and illumination; and although a few old Mooslims maintain a moody silence, the people in general appear to be in great spirits. Every one hopes that peace will be established, and the conscription discontinued for a year or two at least. "All that we want is peace and three or four years without the conscription," is what I hear repeated on all sides.

I wish their hopes may be realised: except for the conscription, and some exactions arising from the necessity of maintaining so large an army, the government of Mehemet Ali is not so bad a one for this country as many people imagine.

6th July.

Our illuminations went off with great *éclat* and abundant good humour. It is a very different affair from an illumination in England. The minarets of the different mosques, lighted up with great numbers of small glass lamps, had a very pretty effect; but the greater portion of the town remained in darkness, the illumination being almost entirely confined to the bazaars. They were brilliantly lighted up; the shops, adorned with flowers and gilt paper, and hung within with gaily-coloured stuffs; and the dealers, in their best dresses, seated on their carpets, received visits from their acquaintance, and treated them with ices and sherbet. At several places there were bands of music, not very harmonious certainly, and parties of dancers; no drunkenness, no brawling, no picking of pockets,—nothing but gaiety and good humour. We were plentifully besprinkled with rose-water as we passed any shop where we were known, and drank sherbet and smoked a pipe in two or three of them.

An order had been issued that no female was to be seen in the streets after sunset; but groups of faces were obscurely visible behind the wooden lattice of the upper windows, and bright eyes might be seen glancing through the darkness, as they caught the flaring light of the lamps below. Among the crowd collected before a party of dancers, we

saw Salem and Hamoud, two of our servants, accompanied by a comely-looking youth in the Nizam dress. There was something rather odd in his appearance and gait. His fair complexion, blue eyes, and fat beardless face—and his round, stumpy little legs, were as un-Arab-like as possible; and when he caught us looking at him, his face became as red as his turboosh; and he tried to hide himself behind his companions. They, too, appeared a little embarrassed at meeting us; and on a closer inspection their fat little friend turned out to be no less a personage than Frau Katharine, our German housekeeper, who had adopted this method of evading the Governor's edict!

Three days of processions during the day and illuminations at night, is rather too much, and every one appeared heartily to rejoice when it was over. As the roads will now in all probability be free from the bands of marauders who have lately infested them, I shall set off immediately for Damascus. A merchant of that city, who has been here for some weeks, has given me a very pressing invitation to take up my quarters at his house; and as he will not leave Beyrout for some days, he has written to his household to receive me.

The deputation sent by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, to inquire into the con-

dition of the Jews in Palestine, are now in Beyrout. Sir Moses Montefiore has also passed through on his way to Jerusalem; but the object of his visit is not exactly known. His arrival has caused a good deal of excitement among the Jews; he has distributed considerable sums of money in the different towns, and they look on him as the Nehemiah who is to rebuild the temple, and bring them back to the land of their fathers. It is said that he is about to apply to the Pacha for permission to establish a Hebrew colony in Palestine.

From the information obtained by the Scottish deputation, it appears that the number of Jews now in Palestine has been greatly exaggerated, and that the whole Jewish population does not exceed 10,000. Saphet, which before the earthquake of 1837 contained 7000 Jews, does not now contain a third of that number.

There is every reason to suspect, however, that their numbers will rapidly increase by immigration from Europe. The Jews have hitherto enjoyed unusual tranquillity under the government of Mehemet Ali; the feeling which has for ages prompted them to come and lay their bones in the Holy Land is as powerful as ever; and a still more powerful impulse appears now to be urging them towards Jerusalem from all parts of the world. A very general expectation seems to prevail among them

that the period of their dispersion is drawing to a close; and thousands, it is said, have solemnly declared their intention of returning to the land of their fathers, there to await the appearance of the Messiah, the son of David.

Multitudes, no doubt, are resting their hopes on the delusion which made the true Messiah "to the Jews a stumbling-block," and looking for the appearance of a temporal ruler and deliverer; but it is evident that the unbelief of many has been shaken, and that amidst the general expectation that their deliverance is not far distant, there is much uncertainty and many misgivings regarding the coming of the Messiah.

Meanwhile ancient prejudices are giving way: in many places the Jews are less averse than formerly to converse with Christian missionaries on matters of faith; and the deputation found them everywhere, I believe, easy of access, and willing to listen and inquire on the great subjects in dispute between them. In Jerusalem, the converts, or those who are in daily communication with the missionaries, are certainly not exposed to the bitter persecution from their brethren to which any approach towards Christianity would, a few years ago, have subjected them.

The cruel persecutions which "the dispersed of Israel" have experienced at the hands of Chris-

tians from the time of Constantine till little more than a century ago, and the virulent prejudices entertained against them, even at a later period, in our own country, must have gone far to confirm and strengthen their opposition to the religion of their oppressors. But now that, in England at least, these prejudices are nearly extinct; now that the sympathies of the church are awakening towards the despised children of Israel, and they see that we are sincerely seeking their temporal and eternal peace; we may hope that kindlier feelings will arise in their hearts also, and that greater freedom of intercourse and reciprocal inquiry will be established between Jew and Gentile.

There are three missionaries now in Jerusalem, two of whom are Jewish proselytes. Both these gentlemen are now, and have been for more than a month, in Beyrout, and I meet them very frequently. They appear to think, and I dare say it is true, that the Jews listen to them with far less prejudice, and argue with them more fairly and ingenuously, than they do in conversing with the Gentile missionaries. Indeed there can be little doubt that the experience of his own conversion, his more intimate knowledge of all the prejudices of the Jewish mind, and all the errors and perversions of the Rabbinical writings, must give a Jew great advantages in dealing with his unconverted brethren.

There is a kind of national pride, too, if I may call it so, which is, I suspect, a great obstacle in the way of many; a jealousy, and fear that, in attaching themselves to a Gentile teacher, they are abandoning their peculiar character as Jews, which they do not feel in listening to one of their own converted brethren. I have found that Hebrew proselytes themselves are not altogether free from this feeling; and one of their number lost a good deal of his influence, for a time, among the Jews of Jerusalem, by his open want of respect for some of their institutions, which ought to him to have been matters of indifference. In his zeal to show himself a Christian, they said, he forgot that he was a Jew.

"I am a Jew," said a Hebrew proselyte to me, "and never can be anything but a Jew. We never have, and never can lose our national character, by mingling with all the nations among whom we have been scattered; and we ought never to wish to lose it. We shall always be a distinct people. We may become Christians, but we cannot become Gentiles. The religion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the religion of the Jews; Christ came, according to the flesh, of the Jews; the Gospel came first to the Jews, and by Jews it was first preached to the Gentiles. We shall one day," he added, "be restored to this land in our national

capacity, and I greatly question whether the further conversion of the world will not proceed more through the instrumentality of the Jews than of the Gentile churches."

The labours of our missionaries in this country will, I have no doubt, be more effectual by cordially co-operating with their Hebrew fellow-labourers, than if they had the work to begin themselves. The conversion of the Jews in Palestine may arouse attention and excite inquiry among their brethren in Europe; for whatever is done in Jerusalem is very speedily known to the Jews in other countries; but here they are, for the most part, poor and illiterate, and, humanly speaking, unqualified for the office of teachers. Great part of their time, indeed, is spent in reading; not in studying the Scriptures, but in reading the Rabbinical commentaries. They are strictly Rabbinical Jews: and Rabbinism, as has been well said, is the popery of Judaism.

It seems desirable, therefore, that the Church should direct her chief efforts to those quarters of Europe where more highly educated and learned Jews may, by the blessing of God, be prepared to go forth as messengers of peace among their scattered brethren.

The exact period at which the Jews are to be restored to the land of their fathers is among the

"secret things" which "belong unto the Lord our God," and it becomes us not to attempt to be wise above that which is written; but we cannot doubt that recent events in this country are silently working out the designs of Providence, both for the return of the Jews, and the overthrow of the Mahommedan religion. Under Mehemet Ali, the country has been more open to European travellers; both Jews and Christians have enjoyed greater tranquillity than formerly; and while his energetic government has checked the fanaticism of the more rigid Mooslims, his latitudinarian principles and example have not been without their influence in relaxing the bigotry and softening the prejudices of the great mass of the people. Infidels are not permitted to fight under the banner of the crescent; and while the Mooslims have been mutually destroying each other in the wars between the Pacha of Egypt and the Sultan, the Christian population, free from the scourge of the conscription, has been gradually increasing. The Christians of Mount Lebanon are said to amount to no less than 220,000; a formidable number in a country so thinly peopled as Syria is at present.

I must delay replying to your inquiries respecting the government of Mehemet Ali, till I have had more leisure to arrange and compare all the infor-

mation I have received on the subject. Meanwhile be assured, the government of Mehemet Ali in Syria, with all its faults,—and they are many,—is by no means so bad as is supposed in England. A great and beneficial change has been produced on the country in many respects. I am inclined to think that the government is more favourable to the interests of British merchants than that of the Sultan: and that which is our interest is, in a great degree, the interest of the country.

LETTER VIII.

Journey to Damascus, first day: Khan Murad—Plain of the Bekāa—The Anti-Libanus—Village of Dumas—Approach to Damascus—Public and private buildings, baths, fountains, gardens, mosques, &c. of that city.

Beyrout, August 1839.

T—— and I have just returned from our visit to Damascus, where we were most kindly and hospitably entertained by our friend Djorious Maksoud.

We left Beyrout early on the morning of the 10th June, and crossing the plain, began the ascent of Mount Libanus before the sun had attained any great height. The road, if that can be called one which is merely the track made by the passing and repassing of mules and horses, is as bad as you can well imagine. It is little better than a scramble over rocks for a great part of the way; and in some places the descents are so steep, and rugged, and slippery, that it is quite marvellous how the mules contrive to preserve their footing.

The scenery amply repays one for the labour of the journey. The lower heights are well covered

with mulberry gardens, and we passed them more thinly scattered and mingled with olive-grounds as we ascended. Every available nook capable of retaining the soil during the winter rains, appears to be carefully cultivated. Indeed, cultivation is never wholly out of sight, except in crossing the highest part of the range, where the scenery is wild, barren, and rocky. Even where the path winds along the higher ridges, you frequently look down into beautiful green valleys, with their picturesque convents, and cheerful-looking villages, embosomed among the mulberry gardens and vineyards.

As we rode along one of these narrow paths, high up the mountain side, the white mist was still hanging over the valley below; but while we listened to the tolling of the convent-bell, and the faint sound of voices from beneath, the mist gradually dispersed, and disclosed the little village of white stone cottages, surrounded by vineyards and olive-grounds, and overlooked by a venerable convent. The effect of the regular measured tolling of the bell, the slowly-retiring mists, and gradual appearing of the scene in the valley, was very impressive.

In every part of the mountains, except the highest ridges, you find a profusion of flowers: the blue convolvulus and crimson anemone, the

caper, and the myrtle and rose bushes, covered with blossoms:

——— through the grass
The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills
Of summer birds sing welcome as ye pass;
Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class,
Implore the pausing step, and with their dyes,
Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass;
The sweetness of the violet's deep blue eyes,
Kiss'd by the breath of Heaven, seems coloured by its skies.

About four o'clock we reached Khan Murad, the usual termination of the first day's journey; and in an hour later came to a poor village called Miksy, at the foot of the mountains, on the verge of the Bekāa. Finding the house of the Sheich el Belad very uninviting within, we spread our carpets on the roof, and after a very comfortable nap under the open sky, were again in the saddle before the peaks of Anti-Libanus had caught the first rays of the rising sun.

The extensive plain of the Bekāa, anciently called Cœlo-Syria, imperfectly cultivated as it is at present, bears ample testimony to the natural fertility of the soil, and the prosperity which this country might attain under a settled and regular government. Notwithstanding the wretched system of husbandry, it produces excellent crops; the pasture-lands support numerous flocks of sheep, and the thistles, which cover extensive tracts, seem to grow up with uncommon luxuriance.

The harvest, which has been unusually abundant this year, is now nearly over. The fields were already reaped; and as we crossed the plain, we saw at several places the process of treading out the corn by oxen and horses, so frequently alluded to in Scripture. The sheaves are spread over a wide circular space of hard earth; and the grain is expressed from the ear, sometimes by the continued treading of cattle, but more frequently by driving over the threshing-floor a low car, on wooden rollers, drawn by a horse. This appears to accomplish the work more rapidly. At one of these threshing-floors we saw a fellow standing erect on the little car, and driving his horse round the circle in a style that would have done credit to a disciple of Ducrow.

On the eastern side of the plain we passed the ruins of a castle, probably of the time of the Crusades, which crowns a small hill, and appears to have commanded the entrance of the pass by which we entered the range of Anti-Libanus.

After entering this defile, we came upon two tents occupied by some half-dozen Druses, where we alighted to breakfast. We learned from them that the Emir Besheer had established a line of these posts at the distance of three or four hours from this point to Damascus, as the Metawalis were still out in considerable force. They were very

civil sort of fellows, and offered to ride with us to the next post, which, however, we declined.

There is not the same cultivation in these mountains as in the range of Libanus; no villages nor vineyards; but wild rocky glens, or banks, covered with a species of dwarf oak. When we entered Wady el Kharu, the heat was so oppressive that we would fain have rested for a few hours under any shelter, but the sun was now near the meridian, and we looked round anxiously but in vain for the shadow of some projecting rock. Trees there were none, and on neither side of the valley could we find a corner capable of sheltering us from the scorching rays of the sun.

Considerable danger arises in travelling during the heat of the day from not having the body, and especially the head, sufficiently covered. The mules cannot travel at a rapid pace; the body is not kept sufficiently in motion to excite perspiration; and the skin becomes dry and burning hot; the pulse full and quick; and fever is very apt to supervene. The body ought to be covered with as much additional clothing as in the coldest weather, and the head enveloped in shawls, in order to keep up a constant moisture on the skin.

About four o'clock we reached the little village of Dumas, where we were invited to enter their houses by two or three of the villagers, who were

seated at their doors. The house in which we took up our quarters was more clean and comfortable than any Arab cottage I have been in; and after enjoying a short nap, and such dinner as we had brought with us, we walked round the fields in the vicinity of the village.

Harvest work was going on busily here too. The corn already threshed was collected in large heaps on the ground, and the labourers were tossing it into the air with wooden shovels, to clear it from the chaff, which is carried away by the wind, while the grain falls to the ground by its own weight. "The ungodly are like the chaff which the wind driveth away."

The road from hence across the elevated barren plain, called Szakhret el Shem, is dreary and depressing to the spirits, but prepares the mind to be more strikingly impressed by the magnificent view of Damascus, *El Shem Shereef*—"the noble and beautiful." The view from the crest of the hills, which overhang the plain of Damascus on the west, is most enchanting.

The low chain of hills which bound the plain on the east melt into the distant horizon, and are almost lost to sight as they mingle with the hazy atmosphere; and the great plain itself stretches away

Like the round ocean, girdled with the sky.

About two miles from the western hills stands the city of Damascus, surrounded on all sides by gardens, forming a circuit of nearly thirty miles: a little sea of richly variegated foliage, from which the white domes, and slender minarets, and stately cypress-trees, rise gracefully into the clear air; at the foot of the hills lies the beautiful village of Salahieh, from which gardens, and orchards, and villas of rare beauty, extend the whole way to the gates of the city.

The Barada—"the golden river," after leaving the mountains, divides into three branches; the middle and largest flows directly to the city, and supplies the public baths and the numerous fountains with which it is refreshed and adorned; the two lateral branches, after being divided into numerous smaller channels for the irrigation of the surrounding gardens, unite on the south-east of the city, and continue their course in a single stream towards the eastern mountains, near which they are lost in a marsh called Birket el Merdi.

Having descended from the hills, and passed the village of Mezze, at the entrance to the gardens, we proceeded along a narrow lane, between low walls of unburnt brick, under the shade of the fruit-trees: oranges, peaches, pomegranates, apricots, hanging temptingly over our heads; and at nine o'clock reached the gate. We rode directly

to the house of our friend, where we were met at the entrance by his nephew and two servants, who bade us welcome, kissed our hands, inquired after our health, and conducted us into the house.

Passing across an open court, with a fountain in the middle, we were received in a handsomely furnished apartment by a venerable-looking grey-bearded gentleman, a relation of our host, who gave us a very ceremonious but kind welcome.

"Sel á mát ya Khowaga: I congratulate you on your safety—how is your health?—will you drink *shurbat?*—will you breakfast?"

I was half ashamed to seat myself on the beautiful deewans in my soiled and dusty clothes, and proposed that, before breakfasting, we should go to the bath. We were accompanied to the *khamman* by Salem with our changes of raiment, and two servants from the house, who carried perfumed soap, *leefs**, and fine napkins, and a couple of *sheeshehs* † for us to smoke after bathing.

The whole process of ablutions and manipulations, although very agreeable and refreshing to a weary traveller, would be rather tedious and un-

* A whisk, made of fine fibres of the palm-tree. They are brought from the Hedjaz.

† The Persian water-pipe, which is very generally used in Damascus.

interesting in the description. The last process is as follows:—A cake of fine soap is placed, with a little boiling water, in a copper basin, which is made to float in the tank beside which the bather reclines, and is worked up into a froth with the *leef*. With this the bather is plentifully lathered all over, and then deluged with hot water, dashed over him from the tank. But the most curious operation is that called *tuck-tuck-ah*. The operator, beginning with the fingers and concluding with the toes, makes every joint in your body crack once or twice; he twists your body, first one way then another, till he has cracked every joint of your vertebræ; and then, seizing your head in both his hands, he wrenches it round from one side to the other, till he has made your neck crack two or three times, in rather an alarming manner.

When the whole is concluded, the bather has a long napkin fastened round his loins, like a petticoat; another is thrown over his shoulders, and a third wound round his head, and he is then conducted back to the *begtow-wal*, the apartment in which he had undressed.

This is a large, lofty hall, lighted from windows near the roof, with a fountain in the middle and deewans round the sides. On one of the deewans the bather is placed, in a reclining posture, and an attendant brings him a small hand-mirror and a

comb, that he may trim and curl up his mustachios—if he have any. A small cup of coffee is then presented; his pipe, or *sheesheh*, is brought to him, and he reclines, smoking, for half an hour or so, while one of the attendants continues gently rubbing the soles of his feet, and another fans him with a large napkin.

The khammans of Damascus are much more elegant than any I saw in Cairo, and the process of bathing more elaborate. I wish you could have seen us reclining in our long robes and white turbans, with all this attendance and paraphernalia of coffee and sheeshehs; you would at least have admired the gravity with which we performed our part. T——'s countenance, with his black beard of three days' growth, the fierce curl which he gives to his moustache, and his good-humoured expression, exchanged for a look of resolute seriousness, were nearly too much for me, and I could scarcely refrain from startling the grave Mooslims around us by a hearty *guffaw*.

While we were enjoying this dignified indolence, a ckawass entered with a note from Mr. Werry, the English consul, inviting us to dine with him. We, of course, accepted it, thinking that, as our host had not returned from Beyrout, there could be no impropriety in dining out, although on the first day of our visit. But I am afraid our engage-

ment caused some disturbance in the arrangements of our friend's household; the news was received with many exclamations of surprise, and there was a great deal of whispered consultation, and running backwards and forwards, as if some important preparations had been interrupted.

Now that we are returned from the bath, let me describe the house in which we are living. The street is narrow, and you enter by a low, mean-looking door, into a paved court, round which are the doors of different apartments. On one side of this court is an open *leewan* (that is, a room, of which the whole front is open), furnished with carpets, and deewans and cushions. Two large lemon-trees grow at opposite corners of the court, and round the fountain in the middle are placed pots with flowers and evergreens. In one corner stands a tall, slender pole, like a signal-staff, for the purpose of hoisting up an earthen jar full of water, which is cooled by the evaporation that takes place through the porous sides of the vessel.

About one-third of the room in which we sit and receive visitors is paved with black and white marble, and has a small fountain in the middle. Two arched niches contain crystal and china cups for sherbet, *fingans* and *zurfs* for coffee, and bottles for sprinkling rose-water; and, in another, there is a rack for pipes and *sheeshehs*.

The servants either stand in this lower compartment, which is called *doorckaah*, or are within hearing in the court; and the mode of calling them is by clapping the hands.

The floor of the *leewan*, the upper part of the room, is about a foot higher than the pavement of the *doorckaah*, and is covered with a fine mat, and furnished with deewans and cushions; these are covered with scarlet cloth trimmed with gold lace, over which there is a loose cover of thin, sprigged muslin.

The walls are painted in separate pannels, each containing a different pattern, formed by a curious and intricate combination of colours and lines. The roof is carved, and painted and gilded in the old Saracenic style, and sentences from the Koraan are inscribed round the cornice.

No one steps on the *leewan* without taking off his shoes; but I should mention that it is the custom to wear a pair of thin yellow morocco slippers, which are not taken off, and over them a pair of red shoes.

In another apartment, on the opposite side of the court, we breakfasted and dined. Our friend had adopted the fashion, quite new here, of having a table and chairs in his dining-room; but the meals were served up in the old Eastern fashion—one dish at a time—and dinner was a most weari-

some affair. Many of their dishes, however, especially pastry and sweetmeats, are excellent; and at this season of the year there is abundance of delicious fruit; in which, by the by, it is not very safe to indulge too freely.

Two very fine lads, the nephews of our host, generally waited on us at our meals. They did not indeed remove the dishes, nor perform the ordinary duties of a domestic servant, but they continued to stand while we ate, and occasionally poured out a cup of wine, or directed the servants, joining at the same time in our conversation. There is no servile feeling in this, which is no more than a mark of respect paid by all young men to their elders. Neither of these lads would have dreamed of sitting down to eat with their uncle, and scarcely ever received anything from his hand without kissing it; but there was no coldness or restraint in their intercourse, which was very evidently characterised by great kindness and affection, though with a certain degree of respectful deference on the part of the young men which, unhappily perhaps, is seldom seen in more civilised countries.

I forgot to mention that our host is a Christian. He therefore indulges, but very moderately, in the use of wine. It is drunk during dinner, but never presented to visitors at any other time, the usual

beverages being sherbet, or, as the Arabs pronounce it, *shurbat*, and coffee. The sherbet is made in several ways, from the juice of lemons, grapes, or pomegranates, with iced water, and generally presented with a lump of ice floating in the cup. On the morning of our arrival, after returning from the bath, two servants entered the apartment, one of them bearing a tray covered with a fine muslin napkin embroidered with silken and golden flowers, which the other removed, and handed to each of us a crystal cup of this delightful beverage. He then presented the napkin, with which you make a fashion of wiping your lips; and, on receiving the empty cup, kissed our hands.

But this ceremonious formality, although in some respects pleasing enough, becomes wearisome and a positive nuisance, when repeated day after day. When we returned from our business, or our rambles through the city, the sherbet was presented in the manner I have described; if I wiped my face with my handkerchief, a black fellow was ordered to fan me with a bunch of ostrich feathers; if we rose up, we were asked, "Where would you go?" or, *Shoo betreed ya seyidee?* "What do you wish for, O my master?" We could not dress for dinner, nor undress at night, without attendance.

On the second day after our arrival our host

made his appearance; and as he remained at home one whole day to receive visits of congratulation on his safe return, we thought it but polite to sit with him the greater part of the forenoon. A constant succession of visitors flowed in from nine o'clock till late in the evening; and the kissing of hands and rubbing of beards together must have been very fatiguing to our fat friend.

There is something exceedingly graceful and pleasing in the Arab salutation. If the visitor happened to be somewhat inferior in station, he took our friend's hand, kissed it, and touched it with his forehead; if a common acquaintance they shook hands, each kissing his own hand, and raising it to his head; if near relations, they embraced and kissed each other on each side of the face. Then they kept ringing the changes on all the various forms of congratulation practised on such occasions.

"I congratulate you on your safety. I hope you are well."

"Praise be God! how is your health, Khowaga Elias?"

"El ham doo lillah! We were made desolate by thy absence, O Howaga Djorious!"

"May God not make us desolate by thy absence, O Khowaga Elias!"

Then came the inquiry, "Who are the two

strangers?" and, our names having been mispronounced in due form, the same touching of foreheads and congratulations, and inquiries after our health, were repeated. They make use of the same form of expression as the Mooslims do, saying *El-hamdoo-Allah*, "praise be to Allah," *Allāh ye sel limak*, "Allah preserve thee."

Damascus, although it scarcely meets the expectation excited by its romantic appearance from a distance, is a very splendid city. It contains a great many fine mosques, and, it is said, not less than five hundred private dwellings that might rank as palaces. The streets are narrow and intricate, but far less so than those of Cairo. Those which are occupied only by dwelling-houses have a gloomy and dismal appearance, for few houses have any windows to the street, and where there are any, they are covered with a close wooden lattice. The whole city appears to be wrapped in a strange mysterious silence, until you approach the bazaars and other places of public resort.

The entrance to some even of the finest houses, is by a low mean-looking door, in a great blank wall, little according with the luxury and splendour within. This unpromising entrance admits you to a spacious quadrangle paved with marble; in the middle of which a fountain throws up a continual shower, cooling the atmosphere and refreshing the

evergreens and flowering shrubs which are placed around it. An arcade, supported by slender columns, runs round the quadrangle. You ascend to it by one or two steps; it is furnished with rich carpets and deewans, and cushions of damask or velvet embroidered with gold; and from it the doors open into the different apartments. These too are luxuriously furnished; the roofs and walls elaborately painted and gilded, and the cornices ornamented with Arabic inscriptions. But here the same mysterious solitude prevails; the only sounds to be heard are the continual splashing of the fountain, and your own footsteps echoing over the marble pavement; and you might almost fancy yourself in one of the enchanted palaces of the Arabian Nights.

These houses are far from the more busy part of the city; but as you approach the quarters "where merchants most do congregate," the scene gradually changes; you meet more frequent passengers; strings of mules and loaded camels begin to obstruct the way; "the busy hum of men" draws nearer and nearer; and, turning from one of the narrow streets, you find yourself in the midst of a spacious bazaar. The eye is bewildered amid the gay colours of the various articles exposed for sale, and the groups that are seen passing and repassing in every variety of Oriental costume. There is a bazaar

solely for the sale of boots, shoes, and slippers; another for ready-made articles of dress; in another you are deafened by the clattering of the whole fraternity of coppersmiths; saddlery and military trappings are sold in another; and the Armenian gold and silversmiths carry on their trade in what has once been a Christian church.

The wholesale merchants have their warehouses in the great khans, or caravanserais. The finest is that built by Assad Pacha. It enters from one of the bazaars near the great mosque, and is a fine specimen of Saracenic architecture. The arched and vaulted gateway is very lofty, and richly sculptured, and leads into a spacious court, beautifully paved with broad smooth flags. In the centre is a fountain and tank, at which the mules and camels drink; the entrances to the warehouses are under an arcade which surrounds the court; and an open gallery above leads to the counting-houses of the different merchants. The masonry is in alternate courses of black and white stones, in the manner peculiar to the Saracenic style; and the whole is covered with lofty domes, and supported by many pillars.

The manufacture of the celebrated Damascus swords no longer exists; but a true Damascus blade is sometimes offered for sale, and commands a high price. The splendid silk damask inter-

woven with gold, which is seen in some of the richest houses, is not easily found in the bazaars; and, I rather think, it is not now made. The present manufactures are red leather shoes and slippers, a variety of silver work, silk and cotton stuff woven in variously coloured patterns, and some very neat cabinet-work of fine wood inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl. These are made to a considerable extent for the supply of other markets; and there are a variety of other manufactures of minor importance. British manufactures have now taken the place of many of the inferior native fabrics; and many articles which used to be brought from India to the Persian Gulf, and reached Damascus by the caravans from Bagdad, are now imported direct from London and Liverpool to Beyrout. The principal articles of import are cotton goods, cotton twist, iron hardware, West India produce, indigo and cochineal. The bazaar of the mercers displays an extensive assortment of Manchester and Glasgow calicoes, muslins, and printed goods, and a few articles of Swiss manufacture.

The mosques are very numerous and handsome, but they are not so easy of access as those of Cairo; indeed, it is not quite safe to linger too curiously opposite the entrance. Our merely stopping to look into the outer court of the great mosque

attracted the attention of some Mooslims who were passing, and we were advised to walk on. This was once the cathedral church of St. John, and is said to be the largest and most splendid of all the churches erected by the early Christians in this country. It is crowned by a lofty stone cupola, and has two minarets at each end. The outer court, which is very spacious, is paved with marble; it has a large fountain in the middle, and is surrounded by a double cloister. The mosque of the Durweeshes has the finest minarets in Damascus; and another is remarkable for the minarets being encased with enameled tiles of various colours.

Near the entrance to the great mosque there is a fine fountain, which throws up the water about twenty feet; and immediately opposite it is one of the principal coffee-houses. These are generally light, elegant structures, painted with gay colours, and open in front. Creeping plants are trained up the slender columns that support the roof, and the interior is furnished with deewans and cushions; coffee and various kinds of sherbet are served to the guests, and *chibouks* and *nargeelehs* kept for those who do not bring their own. The coffee-houses are almost all placed near these fountains, or open upon a garden, with a little cascade or a stream of water, whose gentle, murmuring sound appears to lull the smokers into a pleasing state of

dreamy indolence. They look very contemplative, without the trouble of thinking. One of the guests at Maksoud's one evening, when we were discussing the comparative merits of the *sheesheh* and *chibouk*, rested his preference of the former on the soothing effect produced by the murmuring of the water in the vase.

Damascus possesses fewer antiquities than might be expected in one of the earliest cities mentioned in the Bible; coeval with some which existed very soon after the Flood. The most ancient remains are a portion of a wall, built with square blocks of stone; and, in some instances, of blocks of which the height exceeds the breadth; a style of building which belongs to a very ancient period. The Castle, like every place of strength in this country, has been destroyed, rebuilt, and altered at various periods. The oldest part, near the foundation, is formed of stones of very great size; and the broad ditch which surrounds it, is built in the rustic masonry of the Romans.

A house is pointed out in one of the great thoroughfares, supposed to be the street "called Straight," as the house of Judas where Saul of Tarsus lodged; and the part of the wall from which he was let down by night in a basket, when the Jews watched to kill him, is also shown. About a quarter of a mile from the eastern gate, you

may stand on the exact spot which was the scene of his miraculous conversion. But there is really little interest in visiting these places in the absence of any better evidence of their identity than might be produced for the situation of the dwelling of "Eliezer of Damascus," the steward of Abraham. The feeling that you are in the city of Damascus, notwithstanding all the alterations which it has undergone, is itself too engrossing to allow any interest to modern, and very uncertain traditions, respecting streets and houses.

The gardens around Damascus extend, as I have already said, for many miles into the plain. They are intersected by numerous streams of water, and may rather be called groves of fruit-trees than gardens. To the west, they extend to the great suburb of Salahieh; richly varied with corn-fields and olive-grounds, deep groves of cypress, and long avenues of stately poplars. There is but one river, the Barada; but there can be little doubt that its diverging branches, which beautify the city and enrich the gardens which surround it, were the "Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus," which Naaman the Syrian thought "better than all the waters of Israel;" and which the present inhabitants hold in scarcely less estimation.

We had intended to visit Baalbec on our return to Beyrout, but the road by Zebdeni was still unsafe; and, although the consul offered to procure us an escort, we thought it more advisable to keep by the direct route till we had crossed the Bekāa, and then turn northwards to Zahle, the principal town in the Emir Besheer's territory; we could there ascertain the practicability of crossing the plain to Baalbec.

The muleteers had lately been travelling in large bodies, for their mutual protection; and a numerous caravan started from Damascus some hours before we bade adieu to that city.

Having taken leave of our kind host, who had loaded our baggage with a supply of cold fowls, bread, coffee, and sugar, we mounted about seven o'clock in the morning, and at three arrived at the bivouac of the muleteers, a few miles to the west of Dumas. The place was well chosen; in a narrow valley, and in the immediate vicinity of copious springs of water. Two hundred mules were drawn up in a double line across the pass, and the bales of goods arranged as a sort of breast-work, to protect the party from any sudden attack during the night. The muleteers, eighty in number, were all armed with pistols or carabines; fine athletic-looking fellows, who looked as if they would show

some fight for the beasts and bales; the rather that, being all Maronites, they could expect no mercy at the hands of the Metawalees.

One or two stray parties of wayfarers had halted to avail themselves of the protection of the caravan, and were busy making their very simple preparations for the night when we arrived.

As the mosquitoes were very numerous in the bottom of the valley, we removed to the shelter of a high rock a little way up the hill, where we spread our carpets, and, having done reasonable justice to our Damascene friend's good cheer, passed a tolerably comfortable night. About two o'clock in the morning we were roused by the preparations for the march, and were soon winding through the rocky passes of Anti-Libanus.

The morning was bitterly cold, and for some hours my fingers were so benumbed that I could scarcely hold the bridle; but the sun was up before we began to descend to the plain, and I think I never felt so hot a day. As we crossed the Bekāa, a party of horsemen were seen at some distance, in the direction of Baalbec. They were too far off to distinguish friends from foes; but the long Arab spear, with its tuft of black ostrich feathers, boded no success to our expedition.

A little after mid-day we reached Zahle, where

we learned from the Mutsellim that the Metawalees had attacked and plundered one of the villages on the plain that morning, and that they were collected in great numbers at Baalbec. We were, therefore, unwillingly obliged to turn back into the mountains, and reached Khan Murad at sunset; and arrived here before noon next day.

LETTER IX.

Troubles in the dominions of the Pacha—Climate and diseases at Beyrout—Popularity of the English—Excursion to Ayn el Berbe—The Maronites—Inhabitants of Beyrout—Manners, climate, &c.

Beyrout, August 26, 1839.

MY DEAR ——,

SINCE our return from Damascus, we have heard that a body of troops, under one of the young emirs of the Druses, had marched against the Metawalies. A skirmish took place in the neighbourhood of Baalbec, in which four or five soldiers and the emir were killed. Twenty of the Metawalies with their leader were taken prisoners, and carried to Damascus, where they will probably all be beheaded. Their chief, the Emir Zhooeb, will at all events lose his head. He was formerly Mutsellim of Baalbec, but was deprived of his government for some of those irregular practices, which, however tolerated under the Turkish pachas, are severely punished by Mehemet Ali. He has committed many excesses lately, and the death of this young emir, a grandson of the Emir Besheer, determines his fate.

An execution of more importance, however, has taken place since I left Damascus. The old Damascene nobles have always been regarded with jealousy by the present government, and they are suspected of having been very actively instrumental in exciting the insurrections in the Houran. Letters from one of these grandees, Ali Aga Ksnet el Katabec, to the Turkish seraskier, Hafiz Ali Pacha, were intercepted; and an order followed for his execution. Some apprehension was entertained that it might not be quite safe, in the present unprotected state of the city; but the decapitation took place in the usual manner, and the body remained all day exposed in the bazaar without causing any apparent excitement among the people. His death is much regretted, for he was a man of high birth, and respected by all classes; but no one appears to doubt the fact of his being engaged in a conspiracy against the government, or to dispute the justice of his sentence.

The heat has now become very oppressive, and I shall be glad to make my escape before September, which is the hottest and most unhealthy month in the whole year. The thermometer now stands at 99° (Fahrenheit) in the shade, and in a draft; and I seldom venture out during the heat of the day. Even writing a letter is rather a serious exertion

and the consumption of grapes, water-melons, and ice, is amazingly increased. We have a slight breeze in the morning, but it dies away before noon; and the nights are so close and sultry that one can hardly sleep in the open air. Many of the Beyroutees now sleep on the roofs of their houses, and those who live in the upper part of the town, if they rise early enough, may see more of their neighbours' domestic arrangements than is intended to be public.

We have had several bad cases of malignant fever, and within these few days three French gentlemen, one of them the consul of that nation, have died, after a very short illness. It is singular that none of the English have been attacked by this fever; but the French appear to agree as ill with the climate as they do with the people. They are not very popular here; and Europeans are no longer designated by the general term *Frank*, but a marked distinction is made between the *Inglez* and the *Franzouce*, very much in favour of the former.

This feeling in our favour is not confined to the people, but extends to the government also. A few days ago T— and I wished to spend the evening with the American missionaries, who were about to remove with their school to one of the villages in the mountains. As the gates are closed at sunset,

and our friends' house is without the walls, it was necessary to obtain permission from the governor to have the gate opened for us on our return. We therefore sent a message by the dragoman of the consulate, to request this favour, and were told that the Seraglio gate would be opened to us till ten o'clock.

About half-past nine we arrived at the gate and knocked—no answer; the sentinel within was most probably enjoying a comfortable sleep at his post. A thundering summons with a large stone, however, at last produced the demand, "*Kee-men dooro*, Who is that?"

"Inglez, open."

"*Deh!* open! *eiwa bookrah*, yes, to-morrow; you are too late."

"*Bookrah*, *bookrah*, what words are these, O man! are you awake? have you not an order from the Bey to open to us?"

"No, there is no order; go, go."

Salem, who was with us, lost all patience at this; and, beating the door, shouted out "*Ya hhanzeer!* O thou hog! what business is this? open, O thou unlucky! where is the key?" "The key is with the Agha," answered the soldier, "and the Agha is asleep." "*Tayeeb*, well, you must awake him." "Eh! who am I, and who is the Agha? awake him! after all we are not asses, we know

something." The Agha however did awake, but all we got from him was, "What can I do? I have no order, what more can I say—the Bey has forgotten."

We were rather in what the Yankees call a "regular fix," and would certainly have been kept out all night, had not a person, attracted by the noise, asked, from within the gate, who we were. Fortunately he knew us by name, and offered to carry a message to the house of Mahommed Bey; but it was three quarters of an hour before he returned with the order for our admission. When the gate was opened, the sentinel had the assurance to ask for *baksheesh*, and received from Salem such a volley of abuse as would have silenced all Billingsgate. He was a hog, all his ancestors were hogs, and all his posterity would be hogs! his father and mother were sold a thousand times over; and their graves defiled in all imaginable ways. The Arabs seldom come to blows, but at railing and abusing one another they may be matched against the world.

On requesting an explanation next day of the governor, and complaining of the indignity with which we had been treated, he acknowledged that he had forgotten the order; he was sorry that we had been detained so long at the gate; but, in order to prevent such an occurrence in future, he would now issue a general order that the Seraglio

gate should be opened to all the English, until the hour of eleven at night. It is a privilege, however, that I have never availed myself of.

Every one who can leave the town has now gone to the mountains, and we who are forced to remain are obliged to content ourselves with a gallop out in the afternoon and return next morning, or the day following. I like these wild rides into the mountains. Last week T—— and I rode up to Ayn el Berde, a beautiful secluded spot, some three or four hours from Beyrout. It is, as the Arabic name implies, a fountain of delightfully cold water, which, issuing in a copious stream from the rocks, is received into a stone basin under the shade of a magnificent caroob-tree. There is no village near it; but within a short distance are one or two lonely cottages among the vineyards and mulberry gardens. It is on the upmost verge of the cultivated part of the mountain; below are gardens and pine woods; and above, the wild rocks and tangled shrubbery. The air is clear, cool, and refreshing after the sultry atmosphere of Beyrout; and the view over the lower heights covered with vines and olives mingling with the dark pine woods, to the wide expanse of the blue Mediterranean, is one of the most beautiful I ever beheld.

We mounted our horses as the sun was setting,

and rode out of the town a little before the closing of the gates, followed by a servant, who carried on his horse some provisions, barley for our horses, one or two utensils for cooking, and the *seggadehs* * to spread under us at night—for at this season it is far more agreeable to sleep in the open air than in the confined atmosphere of a Maronite cottage.

The sun had set long before we reached the foot of the mountains; we were on no beaten path, and Hamoud, our servant, who was to guide us to Ayn el Berde, became so bewildered by the change produced by the moonlight on the surrounding scenery, that he soon lost the way altogether. This, to be sure, was a matter of little importance, as we were quite indifferent where we took up our lodging, and the ride was much too agreeable for me to wish it at an end. It is a delightful excitement, this hunting one's way among the mountains by night; now riding over the open braes in the broad moonlight, and then winding along intricate and rugged paths through the thick groves of pine trees; scrambling up the dry bed of a winter torrent, and then skirting along the verge of some steep descent; the village lights faintly glimmering in the bottom of the valley, and no sound heard but the rushing of the wind and the creaking of the pine trees.

* The prayer-carpet used by the Mooslims.

Poor Hamoud, I dare say, had little sympathy with any such feelings, and could see little amusement in our wild scamper. His *kadeesh** could not keep up with our horses; from leading the way he had very soon dropped behind, and we were obliged every now and then to stop and shout to him, and then start off again as soon as we heard the clatter of his coffee-pots and canisters.

At last, we were fairly brought up, in the middle of an old straggling pine wood, by a ridge of rock about eight or ten feet high. After picking our way out of the wood, we saw lights among the trees above us, and in a few minutes reached a large cottage within twenty yards of the fountain. We had intended to bivouac under the caroob-tree beside the well; but there was evidently some merry-making going on in the cottage, and as the sounds which reached our ears seemed to indicate that the *rakee* had been circulating rather freely, we thought it more prudent to seek other quarters.

About ten o'clock we reached a snug quiet cottage, about a quarter of a mile on the other side of the well, where we alighted. Finding the door open, we walked into the house. On one side were two women apparently asleep on the floor, and on the other, three or four children. The children were too sound asleep to be disturbed by our entrance,

* Hack, gelding.

and the ladies, after looking up to see who the intruders were, very considerately covered their faces with the blanket, and composed themselves to rest again. I observed that they both wore the *tantour* (horn), a most incommodious appendage to one's night-gear.

At the opposite side of the house, on a terrace formed by the roof of some under building, we found the owner of the house, with two Maronite priests, smoking their last pipe before retiring to rest. They received us in the same homely hospitable manner which you have often seen in our own Highland cottages; brought us grapes, and assisted in preparing our coffee while Hamoud was busy with the horses, and in drinking it afterwards. After the usual inquiries after our health, and whether our *keif*, our humour, was good, came the never-failing question, *Shoo ishdeed andac ?* "What is new with you?" and, after discussing all the news of Beyrout, we retired to rest. They pressed us to sleep within the house, but there was a sort of rude porch at one end of the cottage, with vines trained over it, on which I had fixed in my own mind for a sleeping-place, and there our carpets were spread.

It is delightful to awake with the fresh morning air breathing in your face, and the hum of bees in your ears, in such a chamber as ours was that

night. It was "a porch of rare device," as that in which that "comely dame clad in fayre weedes" presented her golden cup to Sir Guyon.

> Archt over-head with an embracing vine,
> Whose bounches hanging downe seemed to entice
> All passers by to taste their luscious wine,
> And did themselves into their hands incline,
> As freely offering to be gathered;
> Some deep empurpled as the hyacine,
> Some as the rubine laughing sweetly red,
> Some like faire emerauds not yet well ripened.

Nothing could be more perfectly lovely than the whole scene before us. The sky and sea were both so purely blue, so calm and unruffled, that the eye hardly detected their meeting at the horizon; there was scarcely a breath of wind to stir the mass of beautifully varied and undulated foliage spread out beneath us; and thin lines of blue smoke rising at wide distances above the trees, alone indicated the neighbourhood of human habitations. There was a still, peaceful silence, made more Sabbath-like by the distant tolling of a convent bell; for one forgot, for a time, that the bell called a few monks only to the performance of vain and unmeaning ceremonies, which seem to degenerate into a kind of mere physical exercise; a religion of attitudes.

I have seen no country where I should like more to spend a couple of months in summer than this. They are a simple, kind-hearted people too, the

Maronites, as far as I can see; and, happily for them, their religion exempts, or rather excludes, them from military service, and they escape the heaviest of all the evils under which this country has suffered—the conscription. There is one drawback to making a summer sojourn among these mountains; the absence of anything like comfortable accommodation for those who feel a prejudice in favour of living in houses, or indeed of anything belonging to civilised life; so, on second thoughts, I give it up. Even in a short ramble of this kind, there are certain discomforts; you cannot carry meat with you, and you can get none except fowls, and they are invariably so tough as to be hardly eatable; and coarse bread, eggs, and sour milk are, after all, but sorry fare. Then, although one gets tolerably accustomed to sleeping in a tent, or even without a tent, you are sadly disturbed by the neighing and screaming of your horses at night. They are the most gentle and docile creatures possible to ride, but if they break loose they sometimes fight like tigers. The horses of this part of the country are the most sure-footed animals I ever saw. On descending from Ayn el Berde, we were rather surprised to see by daylight the ticklish nature of some parts of the ground we had ridden over a night or two before; places that would have insured broken knees, if not more

serious accidents, to any English horse. But the sure-footedness of the horses of this country arises altogether from the manner in which they are brought up. A colt is as much domesticated in an Arab cottage as the pig in an Irish hovel, and as soon as the mare can be ridden, the colt trots at her heels wherever she goes. About a month ago, every second horseman one met in the streets, or around the town, had a colt trotting after him. In this way they are accustomed, from the time they are a month old, to pick their steps over the most rugged mountain paths, and to meet all the sights and noises of a town; and it is very rarely indeed that they either shy or stumble.

I am preparing to start by the next packet, and hope to reach home before Christmas at any rate. I have not been able to visit many places which I ought to have seen, and which I intended to see when I left home; but, in visiting Petra, I have seen what is most difficult and laborious of access, and what will, I fear, in the event of any change in the government of this country, be almost inaccessible. For the rest, the facility of travelling is now such, that really, after one has been here, the distance from England does not appear so great as to preclude all thoughts of a second visit; and I do not despair of yet being able to pass the cataracts of the Nile.

After nearly six months' residence in this place, I do not leave it without some feelings of regret, and some hope that I may return. From the 1st of April till the end of July the climate is delightful; in April and May the thermometer is rarely above 80°; in June and July it ranges between 85° and 90°; and it is only in August and September that the heat becomes really oppressive. During the whole summer we have been unvisited by any contagious disease, until about a month ago; and the fever which then appeared was, singularly enough, confined to the French residents. The peculiar disease of the country is the intermittent fever and ague; but every case which has come to my knowledge, among the English residents, might be traced to some imprudence of their own, sleeping in the open air during the rainy season, riding in wet clothes, or some other want of caution in their mode of living. The natives are a peculiarly healthy, robust race of people, and many of them possessed of great muscular strength. It is no uncommon thing to see a porter on the *marina* walk away with a bale of cotton twist, weighing 600 lbs., on his shoulders. Many cases of fever among the native population arise not so much from the climate as from the excessive quantity of unripe fruit and raw vegetables eaten by the common people. Most of their vegetables—

the *kooseh*, a small pumpkin about three inches long, the *bamiyeh*, the pod of the hibiscus, and the *badingan*, the fruit of the egg-plant—are both agreeable and wholesome when cooked; but all of them are eaten raw by the common people and children, during the hottest season, and when every kind of fruit is abundant. The water-melon, which is imported in large quantities from Jaffa, is a most delicious fruit; but after being kept a few days it acquires a sharp acid flavour, and when cut and exposed to the air it begins to ferment. The better class of people buy them fresh from the boats, or soon after their arrival; but in the bazaars, where they are sold to the lower classes, they are cut into slices and remain exposed to the sun, and covered with flies, and must almost invariably be eaten in a state of fermentation. The prickly-pear, which abounds in the neighbourhood of Beyrout, is also eaten in great quantities, and is, I believe, wholesome enough; but it is really fearful to see the number which an Arab will swallow, one after another. He seats himself beside the basket, and as fast as the seller can open and remove the prickly rind, he bolts the fruit, apparently without any mastication; and after he has swallowed a dozen or two, he wipes his mouth, says *El am doo lillah*, "Praise be to Allah," and rising slowly, walks off to his work.

There is no doubt that this climate is more healthy than that of Bombay or Calcutta; the houses are generally well built, and can be made sufficiently warm during the winter. There are circumstances which do somewhat detract from the pleasure of living in such a climate; fleas swarm in every apartment during the cooler months, and mosquitoes give you no rest during the heat; ugly little lizards run about your bedroom; and all the old houses are infested with black snakes. On entering your room at night with a candle, you may chance to see an extraordinary shadow moving across the floor. You stoop down to ascertain whether it is a mouse or a lizard, and find an immense strong-legged, hairy spider, as big as a pigeon's egg. In your horror at his appearance, you allow the monster to escape into his hole, and are left in the delightful uncertainty whether he won't return to pay you a visit in bed. But one gets accustomed to all these things, and they soon cease to occasion any very great discomfort: you find that the lizards are very harmless; you declare a war of extermination against the spiders; and you learn to submit to the fleas and mosquitoes, because you must.

LETTER X.

Marine Sham-Fight in the harbour of Alexandria—Naval resources of the Pacha.

On board H.M.S. Volcano, Sept. 5, 1839.

MY DEAR ——,

ON the 2nd inst. we sailed from Beyrout and reached Alexandria on the 4th, just in time to get into the harbour before sunset. The harbour next morning presented a very animated and warlike appearance. I had been awakened at an early hour by the drums beating to quarters; and, on coming on deck, found the harbour covered with gun-boats, and the boats of the fleet, which moved in two divisions to attack the Seraglio and the forts on shore—a sham attack, you understand. They kept up a thundering fire for about an hour, and to those who understood it, it might be very pretty sport, I dare say; but as I saw nothing but smoke after the first round, and almost lost my hearing for the rest of the day, besides being kept on board till the affair was over, it was anything but amusing to me. Including the Turkish

fleet, which has in so extraordinary a manner been placed in Mehemet Ali's hands, there are in the harbour at Alexandria twenty line-of-battle ships, and thirty frigates and corvettes, and smaller craft. The *Mahmoudie*, the Turkish admiral's ship, a four-decker, carrying 140 guns, is a magnificent vessel.

The entrance to the harbour is surrounded by dangerous circle of submarine rocks, through which there are two narrow passages. The deepest of these admits frigates; but ships of greater draught of water are obliged to discharge their guns and shot before they can enter. It is said that after the arrival of the Turkish fleet Mehemet Ali caused their guns and shot to be re-shipped, but took care to keep their powder, so that they lie there without the power of leaving the harbour, or of fighting; and they are so placed that each Turk is raked by an Egyptian ship. Meanwhile he is drafting their crews into his own ships, so that the crews of each may consist of two-thirds Egyptians, and one-third Turks. A most shifty old fox he is; and whatever may be thought at home, where nothing is considered impossible for British sailors to accomplish, the English officers here do not look on an attack upon Alexandria as any light matter.

Malta, 11*th Sept.*

We entered the quarantine harbour last night about eight o'clock, and I landed this afternoon, having remained on board the Volcano to lunch with Capt. West, whose beef-steak and champagne were luxuries which I have not seen for many months. And now I must despatch this as quickly as possible, as I have my quarters to arrange and all my trunks to unpack; for every article of clothing must be hung up to the air for three days.

LETTER XI.

Fort Manuel at Malta, and quarantine station—The governmental policy of Mehemet Ali, with opinions thereon.

Malta, Sept. 15, 1839.

MY DEAR ——,

THE quarantine here, if one has any kind of occupation, is not so very uncomfortable after all. I am in Fort Manuel, which is now used as a lazaretto exclusively, I believe, for the steam-packet passengers. I have two sitting-rooms and a very comfortable sleeping apartment above, with every sort of convenience. I have a tolerable space of the ramparts to walk on, and permission either to bathe or fish in the harbour, any time before six o'clock in the morning, which, as far as I am concerned, amounts to a prohibition. Very good, and very dear dinners are furnished from a restaurant in the fort, and a circulating-library offers its bill of fare as soon as your arrival is known.

This fort was built by Manuel de Vilhena, Grand Master in the year 1793; a bronze statue of whom stands in the middle of the square. To

judge from the panegyric which appears on the base of the statue, he must have been a man of the most extraordinary virtues and consummate wisdom. On one side of the square there is a small church, dedicated to St. Anthony of Padua, which is occasionally used when a clergyman happens to be in quarantine. The regulations are very strict, as I have found to my cost. Capt. West called for me yesterday and brought some English newspapers, which he tossed across the barrier, and I very thoughtlessly picked up and put in my pocket; and my quarantine has, in consequence, been extended two days, the ship having two days longer than the passengers.

Meanwhile I cannot better relieve the irksomeness of my confinement than by trying to reply, as well as I can, to your repeated inquiries regarding the government of Mehemet Ali, and its effects on the countries under his dominion.

I have hitherto abstained from giving any opinion on these subjects, because I was anxious to avoid the error into which many English travellers have fallen, of drawing hasty and ill-founded conclusions from impressions received during a rapid journey, merely because these impressions appeared to confirm the opinions or prejudices with which I left home. The whole system of government, the whole character and habits of the people, were

new to me; and where society is composed of elements, and subject to influences, with which we are little acquainted, a careless observer may often attribute to the government evils which arise from a totally different source. Few travellers take the trouble to inquire how many evils, which existed under the Turkish government, have been reformed by Mehemet Ali; or how many abuses of power which they now witness did exist before he became ruler of Egypt and Syria. Few are sufficiently careful to distinguish between what may be justly attributed to his government, and what exists only in spite of it.

Their very imperfect knowledge, more frequently their total ignorance, of the language of the country, is a great obstacle in the way of English travellers acquiring correct opinions on this subject. They never come in contact with the more intelligent and better class of natives, and know little of their opinions, or of the feelings with which they regard the present government. There is enough, on the outside of things in Egypt at least, to confirm the opinions of those who are prepared to take the worst view of the Pacha's character and government; on the other hand, it can hardly be denied that he has introduced many wise and salutary reforms; and his admirers, as well as his opponents, find somewhat to advance in favour of

their own peculiar opinions. Each party is prepared with notable anecdotes and very plausible statistics, which the traveller has neither time nor opportunity to investigate; and just as he happens to have come more or less in contact with either party, do we find him indulging in unlimited panegyric, or equally indiscriminate censure, of the whole character and policy of Mehemet Ali.

Of his character, it is unnecessary to say much. One memorable act, the massacre of the Memlooks, it is impossible for any sophistry to defend; nor will the plea of political necessity go any great way to palliate the deliberate, cold-blooded treachery, by which his victims were allured within the walls of the citadel of Cairo, and shot down in detail, when incapable of resistance or defence. Those who have the best means of judging assert, that Mehemet Ali is not naturally of a sanguinary disposition; and that capital punishments have been less frequent under his government than under the Turks. This may be true; but it is evident that where he has an object to attain, he will not be restrained by any nice scruples of honour, or feeling for the sufferings of others.

At the same time, it must be admitted that a government which, in a Mahommedan country, extends its protection equally over every Mooslim, Christian, and Jew; which has founded

schools of medicine and military hospitals on a liberal and extensive scale; introduced the art of printing; and allowed English missionary societies to establish their schools, and circulate their publications in the capital and in other towns —has done something to advance the country in the scale of civilisation.

In all countries, and under every form of government, there will be found multitudes who are ready to raise the cry of tyranny and oppression against their rulers; and interested persons are never wanting to avail themselves, in moments of excitement, of the misdirected feelings of the people, for their own selfish ends. This is the case in Syria as well as in Europe. I am very far from meaning that the people have no grievances to complain of, but I think some of their complaints are unreasonable; and many of the evils which the opponents of Mehemet Ali attribute to his government, always did exist, and are inseparable from the prevailing religion of the country

Mr. Farren, in his letter to Lord Lindsay, censures Mehemet Ali for having introduced no written code of laws. It is rather strange that Mr. Farren, who lived so many years in a Mahommedan country, should be ignorant of the fact, that the Koraan is at once the standard of religious belief, and the text-book of the civil law;

that the priests are the expounders of the law as well as of articles of faith; and that the introduction of a new written code involves the total overthrow of the religion of Mohammed. In fact, the most strenuous opponents of the present government, and the most active intriguers against it, have been the leaders of the Shereefs, and other rigid Mooslim sects; who regarded many of the changes which the Pacha did introduce as heterodox, and tending to subvert the established religion. They are opposed to all change. Their ideas of civil and ecclesiastical government are expressed in the saying of the Arabian conqueror who destroyed the Alexandrian library:—"If these books contain the truth, they are superfluous, it is already in the Koraan; if what they contain is not there, they are false, and ought to be destroyed."

The circumstances of Syria are somewhat different from those of Egypt. The Pacha is not the sole proprietor of land, and the monopolist of manufactures, as in the latter country; and there, I believe, the people are subjected to heavier taxes, and to a greater amount of enforced labour for the service of the government. But I saw little of Egypt, and had not the same opportunities for acquiring information there as in Syria. You will understand, then, that my remarks now apply only to Syria.

In order to form a fair estimate of the good or evil of Mehemet Ali's government in this country, you must not try it by the standard of enlightened and civilised government in Europe, but by a comparison with that which it superseded. It is not a good government; but what is bad in it belongs to the Turkish government also, and what is comparatively good is Mehemet Ali's. Many evils which may be attributed to him, are not so much evils of system as of mode and degree. The conscription is practised in other countries, but here it is often enforced in a cruel manner, and to a ruinous degree. On the whole, however, I have little hesitation in saying, that the government of Mehemet Ali in Syria is better than that of the Turkish pachas; and I have no hesitation at all in saying, that it has been very much misrepresented in England.

The Turkish pachas received their appointments at Constantinople, nominally for a period of one year only; and as the succession to the different pachalics was an object of continual intrigue at the Porte, they held their office by too precarious a tenure to permit them, had they been so inclined, to attempt any speculative improvements, to feel any interest in the welfare of the people over whom they ruled, or to have any object beyond amassing as much money as possible during the short and

uncertain term of their government. They were nominally endowed with almost unlimited power; but the supreme government was indifferent to their administration of it, as long as the fixed amount of revenue was annually remitted to Constantinople.

Besides the regular taxes, the country was subjected to occasional arbitrary exactions, under the name of *avania*, which were imposed on various pretexts; and neither the *avania* nor the regular taxes were systematically levied from the different classes of the whole community, but extorted from any number of wealthy individuals on whom the local government chose to impose the burden. I have been told by merchants in Beyrout and Damascus, whose fathers or themselves had suffered under this system, that the *avania* was collected in the following manner:—The whole, or a very large portion of the sum to be collected, was first demanded from two or three of the wealthiest merchants, who, to save themselves from total ruin, purchased a reduction of the amount by large bribes to the local governor. The balance was then demanded from a few more individuals, who were forced, in their turn, to bribe the governor; and so on, until the whole *avania* was collected; and, in addition to it, a large sum which went in the coffers of the local

government. Even the great bribe to the pacha could only be effected by means of smaller bribes to a host of intermediate officers. I know one man now in Beyrout, formerly one of the wealthiest merchants in the place, and a proprietor of extensive mulberry gardens, who was totally ruined by these extortions, under the government of Abd'Allah Pacha. Another Christian merchant, who is still living in Beyrout, was bastinadoed nearly to death for refusing to purchase a quantity of soap from Abd'Allah Pacha, at more than double its marketable value. This was a monopoly of the pacha's, who had large manufactories of soap at Beyrout, Sidon, and Jaffa, the produce of which he compelled the merchants to purchase at an arbitrary and enormous price.

The difficulty of collecting the taxes, and the generally unsettled state of the country, was always made a pretext for not increasing the amount of revenue sent to the Porte, while it afforded the pacha constant opportunities for practising those arbitrary extortions by which he filled his own coffers. The reputation of being rich was the sure forerunner of those exactions by which many were reduced to beggary, or left with just enough of capital to enable them once more to amass a sufficient sum to tempt the cupidity of their rulers. The productive industry of the country was checked,

and the profits of successful enterprise, which ought to have given an increased impetus to trade, were exhausted by the *avanias* of the Porte, and wasted in luxurious indolence and debauchery by the pachas.

The Christian suffered even more than the Mooslim, for in addition to the oppression felt, more or less, by all, he had to contend with a bigotry and fanaticism which justified any act of cruelty against an alien from the dominant religion. If a Christian applied for payment of a debt due by a Mooslim, he was treated with the most contemptuous insolence, and often excluded by violence from the house of his debtor. I state this from the information given me by persons in Damascus, who have experienced such treatment from their Mooslim debtors. The law afforded no redress to a Christian against a true believer; and, among the Mooslims themselves, he who could give the largest bribe to the *chadee* secured a decision in his favour. The powerful had absolute control over the weak; public offices were sold, or bestowed on unworthy favourites; the administration of justice was corrupt, and the emoluments of the judge were the bribes and *baksheeshes* by which all law and justice were subverted.

The small number of irregular troops which the pachas kept in their pay were not always sufficient

for their own protection against sudden outbreaks of popular violence. They were unable to check the predatory incursions of the Bedaween tribes, or to control the turbulent nobles, who, living in the style of petty princes, and surrounded by numerous bodies of armed retainers, set the government at defiance, while they distracted the peace of the country by their own feuds.

This state of affairs, the weakness of the pachas, and the supineness of the government at Constantinople, were sufficiently favourable for the designs of Mehemet Ali; but additional circumstances arose, which enabled him to put in execution his project of seizing on the sovereignty of Syria. A number of Jannisaries had taken refuge in the cities of Damascus and Aleppo; and when it was known that Mehemet Selim, the Grand Vizier, who had been so actively instrumental in the destruction of their body, had been appointed to the pachalic of Damascus, Mehemet Ali found ready and powerful adherents, not only in the proscribed Jannisaries, but in the fanatic populace and their leaders, who regarded them as martyrs to the cause of religion. The new pacha was massacred amid the popular tumult which arose on his arrival at Damascus; and Mehemet Ali, taking advantage of the excitement in Syria, and the supineness of the government at Constanti-

nople, marched a large body of Bedawee cavalry across the Desert from Egypt, and invested Acre.

A personal quarrel with Abdallah, Pacha of Acre, was the publicly-avowed pretext for this invasion; but there can be no doubt that it was but the first step towards the accomplishment of a long meditated design to seize on the government of Syria. While Acre was invested by the Egyptian forces by land, the fleet, under Ibrahim Pacha, carried on the attack from the bay; and, after a siege of eight months, the place was surrendered to Mehemet Ali.

After the capture of Acre, Ibrahim placed himself at the head of the Egyptian army; and, in a rapid and successful campaign, routed the forces opposed to him at Homs and Baylan, passed the defiles of Mount Taurus, and defeated the Turkish army on the plains of Koniah in December, 1832. By the settlement of Kutieh, which immediately followed, Syria and the province of Adana were placed under the government of Mehemet Ali, at an annual tribute of 6,000 purses.

The party which had contributed so materially to Mehemet Ali's success in Syria, were opposed to all reform in the civil government of the country. Even the introduction of the European discipline in Egypt had been, for a time, successfully opposed by the irregular soldiery; and it was only while

the Pacha contrived to employ them in the subjugation of some of the distant provinces, that the Egyptian regular troops were embodied, the new discipline introduced, and the nucleus of the regular army too firmly consolidated for further opposition.

The proposed alterations in the civil government of Syria were equally distasteful to the popular leaders and to the more rigid Mooslims. The Jannisaries and their adherents were as averse to the restraints of regular government as the Damascene nobles were to the loss of that irresponsible power and independence of the supreme government, which they had so long enjoyed; and the Shereefs, and other fanatics, regarded the Pacha's opinions as heterodox, and subversive of the true faith. His power, however, was too great to be openly opposed; and whatever might be the feelings of the great chiefs and the dignitaries of the mosque, there was a general impression among the people that the new government would be more favourable to them than that which it had displaced.

The first measure of the Egyptian government was to abolish the *avania*. On one occasion a loan was exacted from the city of Damascus, but I was given to understand that it had been repaid, and that this was the only exaction of the kind which the government had at any time imposed.

On abolishing the *avania*, a new tax was imposed, called the *firde*, which is levied on all males above the age of fifteen, and collected in the following manner.

The governors of towns, and sheichs of villages, were required to make a return to government of all the chargeable persons within their respective jurisdictions. The Divan then fixed a uniform rate per head from this return, to remain unaltered for a certain number of years, when a new return is to be made. This uniform rate varies in different places: in Beyrout, it is 90 piastres* per head on the whole number of chargeable persons returned. The aggregate amount to be collected from each town or village is annually apportioned by its governor or sheich among the individuals liable to the tax, according to their supposed means; and the new rate thus ascertained varies from 15 to 500 piastres. The heads of the different sects of Christians and Jews apportion the *firde* among their respective bodies, and are responsible for its collection.

The *miri*, or land-tax, is levied not only on land but on some kinds of moveable property. The lands are valued by the government surveyors, and the rate fixed for a term of ten years, after which a new survey is to be made. A tax on

* The piastre is worth 2¼*d.* sterling.

cattle and flocks of sheep, also comes under the head of *miri*. The *miri* varies so much in different districts that I am unable to say what the rate is per *feddan**; but the whole revenue derived from this tax is greater than it was under the Turkish government. It must be observed, however, that there is more land under cultivation than formerly.

There is no tax on mulberry-trees, as there is on the date-trees in Egypt; and Mr. Farren is in error in stating that the Pacha has monopolised the purchase of raw silk. The merchants in Beyrout generally make advances to the proprietors of the silk-gardens, on the security of their produce; which is brought down to Beyrout, and sold in the market. The person having the security either takes the silk at the market price, or is repaid his advance by the purchaser. I never heard of the government purchasing silk, or interfering in any way whatever with the sales.

In addition to all other impositions the Christians and Jews pay a poll-tax, called *kharatch*, which is collected by the heads of the different sects in the same manner as the *firde*; the payers being divided into three classes, of which the highest pay sixty-three piastres, the second one-half, and the third one-fourth of that sum.

* A little less than an English acre.

Besides these, there are duties levied on various articles of consumption, and on European goods entering Damascus from Beyrout. Many of these have lately been modified, and some of them removed altogether. The duty on butcher-meat was farmed by one individual, who received the duty when the sheep were slaughtered; and it was illegal to kill a sheep, except at the public slaughter-house, where the duty was paid. This duty was removed a few months ago, and meat which was sold in the bazaars at 4½ piastres the *oka* *, can now be got for about half that price. Fruit, vegetables, and fish, pay a small duty when brought to market. The loaves, or rather cakes, of bread, are always sold at the same price, but are made larger or smaller according to the price of wheat. About two years ago the average price of wheat in the Beyrout market was twenty piastres the *urrabah* †; but, in order to encourage importation, the duty on foreign grain was taken off; and the price this year is about sixteen piastres.

All the present taxes were levied by the Turkish government, except the *firde;* but it is impossible to form any comparative estimate of the actual drain on the pecuniary resources of the country,

* The oka is 2⅘ lbs.

† The urrabah is equal to 14 okas.

under the Sultan and under Mehemet Ali. It is true the actual amount of the present taxes is considerably greater than the apparent amount under the Turkish government; but it must be kept in mind that while Mehemet Ali's taxes are regularly and rigorously collected, those of the Sultan were partially levied, irregularly collected, and diminished in their way to the treasury. The bribes which were extorted from the people, and without which no officer of the government could be approached, and the numerous petty extortions to which they were continually subject, added very materially to the burden of the regular taxes, although to what exact amount cannot, of course, be ascertained.

The appointment of the heads of the Christian sects, and of the Jews, to collect the taxes from their respective bodies, has relieved them from many vexatious extortions which they suffered under the Turks; and the system of bribery which formerly pervaded every branch of the public service has been almost entirely abated. The governors of cities, and other officers of the government, may sometimes abuse their power; individual cases of oppression may occur; and a *chadee* may take a bribe; but such offences are not of so frequent occurrence as formerly, and are very severely punished. The liberal salaries allowed to the

governors of towns, and military and civil officers of rank, remove to a certain extent the temptation to receive bribes; and the severity with which the offence is punished has made it too dangerous to be practised to anything like the extent which formerly prevailed.

The partial manner in which the Turkish taxes were extorted from a few wealthy individuals, necessarily relieved the great mass of the people from their share of the general burdens; and they, of course, complain of the increased taxation, as they would have complained of any taxation at all. The taxes are heavy, and the system of levying the *firde* at a fixed rate for a term of years, on each town or village, is manifestly unjust; the tax remains unchanged, while the population has been diminished by the conscription and other causes, and consequently the rate falls more heavily on the individual payers of the *firde*.

But although the taxes are felt to be heavy, the single circumstance of their being so far systematically fixed, that there is nothing vexatious in the mode of collecting them, and that every one knows the maximum, beyond which no demand will be made upon him, has given rise to a feeling of confidence in the security of property which all feel, though few reflect on the causes from which it proceeds. I have never conversed with any

intelligent native merchant, and brought his comparative situation under the two governments distinctly before him, that he did not acknowledge the government of Mehemet Ali to be far preferable to that of the Turkish pachas, with some exceptions which I shall immediately notice. These exceptions, which arise from the maintenance of a large standing army, are not so much felt by the Christian population, who are excluded from all military service, and who are, without exception, favourable to the present government. Their situation is comparatively better than that of the Mooslim population, as they formerly suffered more; and their adherence to the present government, although they pay the *kharatch* in addition to all the exactions to which the Mooslims are liable, is no slight evidence that the taxes of Mehemet Ali, although more extensively, are, on the whole, less severely felt than those of the Turkish government.

The burdens incident to the maintenance of so vast a military establishment as that of the Egyptian government, press heavily on all classes of the Mooslim population; and, with the exception of the conscription, are equally grievous to the Christians of Syria.

Large contributions of grain are annually required for the service of government, which the

farmer is compelled to supply at the price fixed by the Divan* while the crop is on the ground. The price fixed is generally a pretty fair one, and indeed can hardly be otherwise in the district to which I refer, as the members of the court by which it is determined are nearly all large landed proprietors; and although this exaction does depress the agriculture of the country, it would

* The title of this court is "Dîvân Medjlis ech-chara el'-âli," *i. e.* "The High Council of Law," and its members are

† Moufti Efendi: President.

‡ Nakîb Efendi: Vice-president.

Nasîb Efendi.

Omar Efendi Ghâzî.

Hâsibi Efendi.

Hidjilani Zâdè.

Abdallah Bey, son of Asâd Pâchâ.

Khalîl Bey, cousin of the Moutasellim of Damascus.

Ahmed Bey, son of the Moutasellim of Damascus.

Râghib Efendi, son of Taki ed-din Efendi.

Alî Aghâ Djabri Zâdè.

Abdallah Aghâ.

Ahmet Efendi Mâlkî Zâdè.

Mouallim Râfâêl Farhi, a Jew named by Ibrahim Pacha;

And one Christian, named by the members of the council.

The two last have their seats only during two months of each year

All the sentences and decisions of the council are referred to Shereef Pâchâ, and Bahrî Bey. All the members of the court are proprietors of lands and villages.

† Moufti is the title of the chief doctor of the law.

‡ Probably the Nakîb, or chief, of the descendants of the Prophet.

not be so severely felt were it not for the vexatious mode in which it is enforced. No grain can be removed from the ground until it has been surveyed by the government officer, and the required portion claimed for the government service; and it consequently happens, that the crop is sometimes injured by remaining too long in the field. In a climate like Syria, however, this is not the greatest grievance which the farmer has to bear; the crop seldom suffers much, but the portion claimed by the government must be delivered at the government granaries, which may be one, two, or three days' journey from the farm, and for this no allowance is made. This is certainly the heaviest tax to which the agriculture of the country is subject, and it is a very grievous one. *Tibbin*, or chopped straw, which is used as a substitute for hay, is supplied to the government in the same manner.

Mr. Farren states, in his letter to Lord Lindsay, that grain is purchased in this manner by the government for speculative purposes, at a rate below the market value, and then brought into the market; thus establishing a competition, in every way disadvantageous to the farmers.

In Beyrout there was no grain sold by the government this season—no one to whom I spoke on the subject appeared to be aware of any such

practice — and gentlemen in the service of the European governments, as well as in that of Mehemet Ali, have assured me, that the exactions of grain are, as near as can be, regulated by the wants of the service; but that the surplus, if any, is sold at the market price at the end of the season.

The *suhhra*, or impressment of animals for the service of government, is another grievous burden on the people. This is enforced whenever troops are on a march, or when regiments are moving into summer quarters; and, besides the loss sustained by the government rate of hire being lower than that of the market, the system is attended by circumstances of a more vexatious and injurious nature. The soldiers, I am afraid, often take animals from the pastures without taking the trouble to inquire to whom they belong; the owners may be old, infirm, or women, and unable to follow the march; the beasts are often overloaded and otherwise ill-treated, and no compensation is allowed for those that die. The animals must sometimes be taken when their labour is required in the field, and the operations of the farmer are either injuriously interrupted, or he is obliged to hire other animals at a higher rate than he receives for his own. The class which appears to suffer least by the *suhhra* are the

regular muleteers. Many of them are men of substance, possessing ten, fifteen, and some of them as many as thirty mules, worth on an average 12*l.* sterling each. They are fine, active, sturdy fellows, and can generally manage to have their beasts well enough treated; and they indemnify themselves for the low rate of hire, by raising the market price for the conveyance of goods.

But the most oppressive measure of the present government, that which has been most pernicious in its effects on the country, and most prejudicial to the interests of Mehemet Ali himself, is the conscription. The enormous extent to which it has been exercised, has drained the country of far too great a proportion of its population, and, of course, proved a serious check on its productive industry; and the barbarous manner in which the conscription is enforced, has done more than anything else to alienate the good-will of the Syrian people from the present government. The wealthier merchants in the large towns were able for a while to procure substitutes for themselves or their sons, but this is becoming every day more difficult. In the villages, it is no sooner known that a new levy is about to take place, than the young men fly to the mountains for concealment; and it has therefore become necessary, if soldiers are to be procured at all, to conceal the intentions of the

government, march troops suddenly into the towns, and seize upon every able-bodied man, until the required levy is complete. The conscription, indeed, is a misnomer, for there is no system, no plan of making the population of one period succeed that of another in their liability to military service; the only appearance of system consists in fixing the number of men required from each town or village; and they are then seized on without reference to age, station or employment. In this manner families frequently lose the only member who is capable of contributing to the support of the rest; and, in addition to the grievous violence to the domestic affections, which are very strong in the Syrian people, a great deal of merely physical misery is the consequence. Young men are forcibly separated from their families, tradesmen from the employment on which their wives and children depend for subsistence; and the fellah is often seized in the midst of his agricultural operations, at the very season, perhaps, when his labour may be necessary for securing the harvest. No measure has proved more injurious to the country, than this abstraction of so large a portion of the population from its productive industry; nothing has caused more general and individual suffering, or given a severer blow to the interests of Mehemet Ali in Syria.

But for the conscription, and those exactions which arise peculiarly from the Pacha's military establishment, I believe that the government of Mehemet Ali in Syria, if not so popular with the Mooslim as with the Christian population, would certainly be preferred to that of the Sultan. There is greater security of property than heretofore; the laws are more impartially administered, and the extensive system of bribery, which was in itself a heavy tax upon the people, has been almost entirely abated. A few wealthy individuals may formerly have lived in greater luxury than is now generally seen; but it was in the privacy of their own houses, and carefully concealed from all but their families and domestic slaves: now the merchants, and better class of shopkeepers in Damascus, dress and live in a style which, in former days, would only have marked them out as objects of plunder. Except in times of peculiar excitement, a Christian will no more submit to be defrauded or insulted by a Mooslim than by a Jew; and in Beyrout, where the Christians are the majority of the population, they even wear the white turban, which is prohibited everywhere else.

The influence of the Pacha's police regulations are very manifest, in the security with which all the great routes throughout the country may be travelled; and in the detection and punishment of

crimes which, under the Turkish government, would have escaped all inquiry. No class, from the Pacha's own ministers to the meanest fellah, is exempt from the operation of the laws; and there can be no doubt that one or two instances, in which the delinquencies of the former have met with exemplary punishment, have had a very salutary influence in checking any abuse of power on the part of the officers of the government. An instance of this occurred some time before my arrival at Beyrout; when the governor, a man of high military rank, was punished with well-deserved severity for a most nefarious abuse of power. He had acquainted many individuals of the place that the conscription was about to be enforced, and offered to secure their families against its operation, in consideration of certain sums of money; which he had no sooner received than he caused the parties, by whom he had been bribed, to be seized and hurried away to the head-quarters of the district. The complaints of the people of Beyrout, which never could have reached Constantinople, very soon came to the ears of Mehemet Ali; and the governor was not only degraded from his military rank, but condemned to work in chains on the fortifications of Acre, where he now remains.

Several imposts which were formerly farmed,

are now collected by the government; and in every instance, I believe, the change has been a beneficial one. The *miri* is still farmed by the Emir Besheer in his own territory, and is heavier than along the coast, where it is collected for the government. The arbitrary reduction of the current value of the circulating coinage is an unjust and vexatious measure, which has been, of late, as frequently adopted by the Sultan as by Mehemet Ali. The intrinsic value of the Egyptian gold coinage is much greater than that of the Turkish, however; and the Pacha's coins are consequently disappearing, as they are frequently melted, or exported to England.

When we consider the nature of Mahommedan government, and the influence of the Mahommedan religion, to repress all improvement and oppose all change, I think it must be allowed that the reforms which Mehemet Ali has effected, give evidence of great energy, and of very considerable political sagacity. That his policy has been sometimes unwise, as regards his own interests, and that the Syrian people have many grievances to complain of, there can be no doubt whatever; but the choice is not between the government of Mehemet Ali, and such a system as you or I would desire to replace it with, but between his government and that of the Porte; and I am very much

mistaken indeed, if the latter be not found the more oppressive of the two.

Mehemet Ali, and his supporters, say that the grievances under which Syria now labours arise from the peculiar exigencies of his political position; from the necessity of maintaining so large an army, to secure himself in the possession of the country he has conquered. There is certainly some truth in this; for, were the army reduced, the conscription abandoned for a few years, and some of the heavy burdens connected with the military government abolished, the Syrian people would enjoy more personal freedom, and greater security for their lives and property, than ever they did under the Turks. The attachment of the Christians to the present government is a proof of this; and I do not think that the insurrections in the Hauran, and other districts, arose from any desire on the part of the people to restore the government of the Sultan. There can be little doubt that these risings were occasioned by the secret influence of the Osmanlee chiefs in Damascus, during the excitement arising from the conscription, and the seizure of grain for the government. On the part of the people, I believe, it was a mere resistance of the government, without any definite ulterior object; on the part of the Damascene nobles, it was with the hope of restoring

the Osmanlee dominion: not that the country might be relieved from oppression, but that they might recover their independent and irresponsible power, under the old system of favouritism and fanaticism.

If the promises of Mehemet Ali are to be trusted, the recognition of his government by Europe would be followed by the reduction of his army, and the removal of many burdens which press heavily on the productive industry of the country. His own interest is some security for the sincerity of these promises; for the revenue of Syria, after paying the tribute to the Porte, and the expenses of the civil government, leaves a considerable balance in his favour, which is at present exhausted by his military expenditure. I confess I should like to see the experiment tried, and I believe the same feeling is entertained by a great portion of the Syrian people. While the issue of the invasion from Turkey was in suspense, all trade was at a stand; but immediately after the victory of Nazib, confidence revived. It is now hoped by many that the Pacha's government will be recognised by Europe, and by all that peace on some permanent basis will be established between him and the Porte.

It is worthy of remark, that many of the most important changes produced by the government of Mehemet Ali, have arisen from his indifference

to the maintenance of the long-dominant religion; and that, however his un-Mahommedan opinions and practice may have offended the more fanatical Mooslims, they have had considerable influence in relaxing the bigotry and softening the prejudices of the great mass of the people. Franks are generally treated with civility, and the English are everywhere popular, and highly respected. The Syrians have a high opinion of our wisdom and upright dealing. "The word of an Englishman" is proverbial; and they believe that he can do many more wonderful things than making watches and pen-knives. It is curious that a very general belief prevails both in Egypt and Syria, that the English will one day take possession of these countries; and I have been asked more than once by Christians, if I knew when the English were coming.

The establishment of missionary schools is likely, I think, to exercise an important influence on the future prospects of this country. The American schools, which have been in operation for some years at Beyrout, appear to be admirably conducted; and the missionaries are men, not only of exemplary piety, but of extensive and varied acquirement. Their church service, in the Arabic language, is sometimes attended by not less than 150 adult natives. The instruction in the schools

is altogether in the English language, and, besides the principles of the Christian religion, comprises the usual branches of an English education—reading, writing, arithmetic, geometry, mechanics, &c. The acquisition of the English and French languages is becoming a very important qualification to young men intended for mercantile situations, or for the service of government, or of the European consulates; and although some may be influenced by higher motives, many will, I believe, send their children to these schools for the purpose of obtaining a European education. By such means we cannot fail to introduce, however slowly at first, such a knowledge of European history and European institutions, as may awaken the people from that self-satisfied ignorance which characterises all Oriental nations, and which forms one of the greatest obstacles to their advancement in civilisation. Nor will this effect, it may be hoped, be unaccompanied by the saving as well as civilising knowledge of the truths of the Gospel.

By his toleration and protection of these schools Mehemet Ali is doing more towards the civilisation of Syria than he dreams of, or than can ever be accomplished under a more rigidly Mahommedan government. Under the Turks, not only will many of his political reforms be overturned, but this source of knowledge and civilisation be stopped, and the country recede into the state of

barbarism which characterised the reign of the Turkish pachas. Mahommedism once more dominant, will quickly deliver itself from the presence of whatever would dispel the darkness and ignorance which are necessary to its existence.

Mehemet Ali is too sagacious and far-sighted not to know that, even were his government in Syria and Egypt recognised by Europe, his security in these possessions would be greatly increased by his remaining tributary to the Porte, as he would then enjoy all the advantage to be derived from the name and power of the Sultan. His object is, to secure the hereditary government of these provinces, remaining nominally a vassal of the Porte, and continuing to pay the present tribute. So say his supporters; and it is said that the Sultan is inclined to accede to his terms.

The Porte, however, is too weak to act independently. The settlement of the question will depend on the decision of the European powers; and the sooner it is settled the better. It is the Pacha's great military establishment; his continual apprehension that Syria may be wrested from his grasp; and his warlike preparations for such an emergency—that are exhausting the energies of the country.

How the recognition of the Pacha's government in Syria might affect the balance of power in Europe is a question which I have not considered,

and on which I do not presume to offer an opinion. It is the interest which I feel in the prospects of the Syrian people, especially in the intelligent, active, and industrious people of Mount Lebanon, which makes me wish that the present government may not be disturbed.

Observe that I am not defending the government of Mehemet Ali, except in comparison with that of the Turkish pachas; under which all classes, but especially the Christians, were more oppressed than at present. Many of Mehemet Ali's measures have had a very salutary effect on the country, and the trade of Beyrout has increased fourfold since 1833. I should have very confident hopes that the recognition of his government would be followed by a gradual amelioration in the condition of the people; that the natural productions of the country would be increased, and improved in quality; and that the trade might become an important one to England.

It must not be forgotten that the government of Mehemet Ali is not to be replaced by a more enlightened and civilised system; it will only be exchanged for a similar despotism, if Syria be restored to the Turks. His government will only be superseded by that of another pacha, or, more probably, three pachas, as formerly, independent of each other, and all but independent of the supreme government.

All the old abuses will be revived: the *avania*, the

bribery and extortion, the corrupt administration of the laws, and the partial exaction of the public taxes from individuals. The old fanaticism will again be dominant. Woe to the Christian who presumes to ride on horseback in the streets of Damascus, or who is so unwise as to appear rich enough to have a horse at all! The Beyroutees must discard their white turbans, if they would keep their heads safe. Woe to the man who refuses to buy the pacha of Acre's soap, or who dares to call the produce of his silkworms his own!—let him not be contumacious, but take the soap at three times its value, and sell his silk at half-price, lest, like our friend Saliba, the insolence of his tongue be visited on the soles of his feet.

I hope your patience has not been so severely tried by this long letter as mine has by the quarantine. Fort Manuel has become more dreary and monotonous in my eyes than the Desert. To-morrow morning I shall be released, and at one o'clock I embark in the French steam-ship "Scamandre" for Leghorn. I shall take one week of Florence to gather my European ideas together; a visit to the Venus de Medicis, and the Andrea del Sartos, a stroll among the shady alleys of the Boboli gardens; and then bid adieu to cloudless skies and sunshine for the fogs of London and our guid town, where

The rain it raineth every day.

LETTER XII.

Supplementary to the preceding—Prosecution of the Jews—Insurrection in Mount Lebanon, &c.—Conclusion.

Glasgow, Sept. 15, 1840.

EVENTS have occurred since my return to this country, which may appear, from the false colouring with which they have been presented to the public, to be somewhat inconsistent with the preceding remarks. In point of fact, however, neither the treatment of the Jews at Damascus, nor the insurrection of the Christians in Mount Lebanon, are at all inconsistent with my assertion, that both Christians and Jews have enjoyed unusual tranquillity under the government of Mehemet Ali.

The first person arrested on suspicion of the murder of Padre Tomaso, was a Jewish barber, who confessed his own participation in the crime, and the names of his accomplices. Three of these had fled to Bagdad, but the others were arrested, confined in separate cells, and separately examined; and their confessions agreed in the most minute particulars, as to the circumstances of the murder, and the concealment of the remains of the bodies.

After their confession the accused were taken, each separately, with a guard of soldiers, to show the place where the mutilated remains had been buried. They all pointed out the same spot; the ground was opened, and the bones examined by Dr. Lograsso, the superintendant of the military hospital, who pronounced them to be human bones.

All these confessions were given under the bastinado; and God forbid that I should appear to defend so barbarous and inhuman a practice; but no other mode of torture was employed, and the minute and disgusting details which appeared in some of our public journals, were mere fabrications, got up for the purpose of exciting a feeling in this country against the Pacha of Egypt.

I state these facts on the authority of a highly respectable British merchant, who was in Damascus while the investigation was going on, and who is as little under the influence of any prejudice against the Jews as any man I know.

No one may justify the mode in which these proceedings were conducted; but it is an error to characterise them as a religious persecution. Confessions are extorted by the same means, in all similar judicial examinations, in every part of the Turkish dominions; and the Damascene Jews were subjected to this torture, not as Jews, but as criminals. They would have been treated in the

same manner, had they been Mahommedans. The assertion that this accusation was got up for the purpose of extorting money from the Jews, is equally unfounded: on the contrary, it is well known that large sums were offered to the local government to stay proceedings, and refused.

During the excitement occasioned by these proceedings, the Jews were exposed to violence from the populace; but the government interfered with none except those accused of the murder.

Among the Europeans in Beyrout and Damascus I learn that there is no doubt that the persons accused were guilty of the murder. The second part of the accusation, viz., the use of blood in the Passover cakes, was part of their own confession; and, however it may be discredited, it has not been disproved. Arguments have been brought from the Old Testament, the Rabbinical writings, and the practice of the Jews in all ages, to show that the use of blood for such a purpose is unknown and unheard of till now; and that therefore the accusation is false. I confess this appears to me rather an illogical conclusion. On the same grounds it might be asserted that Jews never fall into idolatry, nor eat unclean meat, nor do anything that is prohibited in their law. Nor was this accusation brought against the Jewish people, but against a small sect whose tenets and practices, founded on oral tradition, are scarcely known to any but themselves.

But my object is neither to defend the government of Mehemet Ali nor to criminate the Jews of Damascus. I would simply point out that this was not a religious persecution, and repeat that the Jews have suffered less, and enjoyed more personal freedom, under Mehemet Ali, than they did under the Turkish pachas, or than they do now in the Sultan's dominions. I think that all Jews who have visited Palestine of late years, would admit this to be the case.

Of the insurrection in Mount Lebanon it is scarcely necessary now to say anything. The mountaineers resisted the order for their disarmament, as they had done on a former occasion; and the insurrection would soon have been put down, had it not been fomented by English agents for political purposes. The excitement has subsided, and now all the exertions of Admiral Napier and Mr. Moore, the English consul, are unable to blow it into a flame again. The whole affair has failed of its intended effect; and the mountaineers, however willing to have their grievances redressed, have no wish to exchange the government of Mehemet Ali for that of the Sultan. They have experienced both, and know which is most tolerable.

If it was in the hope of exciting a revolutionary movement in the country, that the British squadron have appeared off Beyrout, the hope is, I think, a vain one. The Christians hate and fear the Osman-

lees more than they do the Egyptians, and will not rise in favour of the Sultan.

Since it is resolved that Mehemet Ali shall relinquish possession of Syria, it is most desirable that he submit to the terms offered by the four Powers. He cannot ultimately succeed in so unequal a contest; and timely concessions on his part may avert much misery and bloodshed.

Even now, before the negotiations at Alexandria are concluded, Admiral Napier has commenced hostilities at Beyrout. But the evacuation of that town by the Egyptian troops, or the attack with which the Admiral has threatened it, will not advance matters one step, nor serve any other purpose than to exasperate the country against us. One frigate and a steamer might have blockaded the port of Beyrout, and effectually prevented the landing of troops, or warlike stores; and while the whole squadron are investing that town, Acre, which commands the communication with Egypt, and is the key to the whole surrounding province, is left undisturbed in the hands of Abbas Pacha. Time is allowed him to complete his defences, and for Ibrahim to pour reinforcements, unopposed, into this important fortress. The investment of Acre would have embarrassed Mehemet Ali more than any blow that could be struck from Alexandria to the Gulf of Scanderoon; and, as it will be the most important point of attack, in the event

of active operations becoming necessary, the blockade of Beyrout with so overwhelming a force seems little better than waste of time.

It is in vain to hope for any revolutionary movement in our favour, except from the Maronites; and the Admiral's proclamations to them have produced no effect. They might rise, were there a hope of their being permanently placed under British protection, but I do not believe they will ever move for the restoration of the Osmanlees. The Druses will join in any general rising of the Mooslim inhabitants; but the landing of a European army will be the commencement of a holy war against the Franks. The ancient fanaticism has already manifested itself, and once called into activity, will spread like wildfire over the whole land; the contest will assume a new character, and we shall find, not the Egyptian armies, but the whole country against us.

If active measures are to be taken, a great blow must be struck at once, in mercy to the country, as well as for our own sakes. Any operations undertaken with inadequate means, will only embitter and prolong the struggle. The slightest advantage gained at first will infuse additional energy into the Egyptian troops, already confident in the hitherto uninterrupted success of Ibrahim, and animated by a fanatic zeal in the cause of Islam. If once the war assumes a religious cha-

racter, the Turkish troops will fall away from their European allies, and the country will rise against us: the rains will commence in October and continue till February; and the climate and pestilence will come in to aggravate all the horrors of war.

Before these pages are printed, Mehemet Ali will have submitted to his fate, or active operations will have commenced; and, in the latter case, it is impossible not to fear that some very "untoward event" may follow. France will not remain neuter, if the Russians occupy Constantinople, or if Russian troops are landed in Syria.

Should Mehemet Ali accept the terms offered him by the four Allied Powers, the immediate danger may be averted; but his independent sovereignty of Egypt will be little better than a dependency of Great Britain, who, from her Indian territory, commands the entrance to the Red Sea, and may at any time land an army, already inured to a tropical climate, within three days' march of Cairo.

If the object of our present policy in the East be to preserve the integrity of the Turkish dominions, we begin oddly enough by offering an important section of them to Mehemet Ali. We call him a rebel and usurper; with one hand we threaten to punish his rebellion, and with the other we reward it with the sovereignty of Egypt. Who gains by this partition of the Sultan's do-

minions? England alone; and her influence over this newly erected sovereignty may prove quite sufficient cause of jealousy to involve us in a European war.

Has Russia no ulterior object? Mehemet Ali may hesitate to believe that "*the barren countries* of Nubia, of Sudan, of Senaar, offer a vast field for the conquests of *science and civilisation;*" and possessed as he is of a large army and immense *matériel* of war, it is at least to be feared that he may, as he has threatened, "turn the empire upside down, and bury himself under its ruins." Then will Russia be the first to plant her iron footstep on the fallen empire, in her first stride towards our Indian possessions, so long the object of her ambitious and crooked policy. The Sultan, among his Frank allies, like a traveller in the hands of the Bedaween Arabs, will be stripped to the skin, and left to perish. The Mahommedan power will be for ever overthrown. May He who "maketh the wrath of man to praise him," overrule all for the establishment of His own kingdom in its stead!

THE END.

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